

REASON

THE JOURNAL OF THE RATIONALIST
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Published Fortnightly

"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country."

Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.

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Anna I.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

By R. D. KARVE

The Bhagavad-Gita, the so called religious book of the Hindus, is a part of the great and wonderful epic, the Mahabharata, which has perhaps never been surpassed, or even equalled, in narrative and dramatic interest. The main story turns on the rival claims of two sets of cousins to the throne of their fathers: the hundred sons of one brother against the five sons of another brother, the matter being finally decided by a war, in which several princes joined each side with their armies. Arjuna, one of the heroes, the most powerful of the five brothers, on whose prowess the fate of the war depended to a large extent, was a great friend of Shri-krishna, who was supposed to be the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, who belongs to the Hindu trinity, and whose business it is to re-establish religion (so says the Gita) when it is waning from any cause. The God-man had agreed to be Arjuna's charioteer during the war, and when it was about to commence, he found his friend Arjuna very despondent at the thought that he was going to kill his cousins and several respected persons who were his enemies for the

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Mr. Abraham Solomon will broadcast a talk entitled "Why Rationalism?" on Tuesday January 10, from 9-50 p.m. to 10-5 p.m. from the Bombay Station of the All India Radio.

time being by force of circumstances. It was to buck him up and to make him fight at all costs that Shrikrishna gave him the advice which has come to be known as the Bhagavad-Gita. Some people go so far as to believe that he actually recited the verses verbatim on the battlefield, which is not so very surprising after all, for it should be equally easy for a god to speak in verse as in prose!

The whole recital is divided into eighteen chapters, and contains, in the form of questions and answers, the essence of Hindu religious philosophy. The soul is immortal, says the god-man, you cannot destroy it even if you want to. You can only destroy the frail mortal body which covers it. Then why worry so much about it? Do your duty as a Kshatriya and fight. To retire from battle at this time will bring discredit and dishonour, and after all there is no harm in killing these people. You are not the real killer, you are only the instrument. They are doomed. And to convince his disciple, he showed him a miracle. The body of Shrikrishna seemed to contain all the world, gods and rishis, Sun, Moon and Stars. It was resplendent like a thousand suns, and had no beginning, middle or end. And there also, in the mighty jaws of that apparition, all the 100 cousins who were opposed to him and several warriors on either side were being already crushed to death. After this magic performance, Shrikrishna told him that since these people were already dead, it would be as well for Arjuna to fight and get credit for having killed his enemies by his irresistible valour and skill at arms. There was no doubt of the result since they were already doomed and would die anyhow even if Arjuna did not fight. Arjuna was evidently frightened out of his wits, or he would surely have seen that there would hardly be any credit in fighting, when the result was a foregone conclusion or in killing even valiant warriors who had been already killed by God.

Even after this, there are seven chapters more of questions and answers, but Arjuna was so much impressed by

the exhibition of the power of his divine friend, that he was not in a state to argue about it. All the same, the god generously allows him to make his own decision after considering all his lectures and demonstrations! Apparently, though it was decided that so many warriors on each side should die, it was not decided by whose hand they should die! Otherwise, the freedom of choice offered to Arjuna is a mere pretence, a display of liberality without any genuine freedom of choice.

To the modern mind, whether rationalist or not, there are many things in the Bhagawad-Gita which are extremely objectionable. For instance this god asserts that he created four castes with different attributes: 1. Brahmins, whose qualities are described as calmness, self-restraint, austerity, cleanliness, forbearance, straightforwardness, knowledge, worldly and spiritual, and belief in God; 2. Kshatriyas, whose natural qualities are given as bravery, prowess, fortitude, ability, not running away from battle, charity and princely attitude; 3. Vaishyas, whose natural aptitudes are agricul-

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ture, keeping cows, trade; and 4. Shudras, whose nature is to serve other people. This Shudra class is very convenient for the others and seems to have been expressly created for that purpose! In another place, this same sacred book says that by following certain prescribed methods, **'even women, Vaishyas and Shudras'** can win absolution, what of sacred Brahmins! Women at least should revolt against this kind of doctrine, but as in all religions, women are found to be an easy prey to any kind of oppression practised in the name of religion. This sacred book, or at any rate this passage, is a piece of trickery, raising the status of Brahmins and Kshatriyas (men only) at the expense of others. One might expect a god at least to be equitable. In fact gods, souls, and the like are invented just to give an imaginary compensation to people who suffer from obvious injustice in this world. Everybody knows that there is no justice or equity in nature. Now if even the gods of our invention prove unjust, what is the use of gods and religions?

Another means of consolation invented by spiritualists is to consider, or at least proclaim, all the world to be unreal, the effect of "Maya" (illusion). The God of the Bhagavad-Gita says that this illusion is all his doing, that he sits at the heart of all beings and creates the illusion of reality by means of his magic power. And at the same time, he advises his favourite "Arjuna" to realise this. What kind of god can he be who boasts that he takes pleasure in misleading his creatures into thinking the world real when it is only an illusion? And then he says that the only way out of it is to beseech this same deceitful god humbly to stop the deception. In the first place, nobody can take this step unless he realises that he is being deceived in this way, and if he does, would any one think of imploring the deceiver not to deceive? And besides, if the deception is found out, does it not also prove the incompetence of the deceiver? If then in this case, God is the deceiver, what becomes of his omnipotence?

Religious people accept all this nonsense as religion. Mahatma Gandhi proclaims his wholesale belief in this sacred book, and he apparently finds his grounds for truth, "Ahimsa" (non-killing) and non-violence, from this book which avows this deceit, and gives direct advice in favour of fighting, not for self-defence, not for any spiritual reason, but because it is the duty of a Kshatriya, and in order to establish right to a throne. He believes in the caste system, at least in the four classes established by this god and in the inferior status given to women. And he is considered a spiritual leader by thousands of followers all over India and even finds some European and American ladies to admire and follow him! Is this an instance of successful deception practised by the Shrikrishna of the Bhagavad-Gita, of the confusion created in all minds by god as stated in the sacred book? Or is this merely the natural result of accepting any kind of nonsense in the name of religion? Is this kind of teaching in keeping with the times, when equality is being claimed on all sides and women least of all are prepared to accept a lower status, except perhaps those who have not yet learnt to look through the age-long deception practised by all religions on their followers?

Another point deserves notice. It is expressly mentioned in the Gita that it is an attribute of Brahmins to believe in God, not of the other three classes. Apparently the others can be atheists without any harm! At any rate, it is easy to see that it would pay them to become atheists rather than belong to a religion which deliberately gives them an inferior status. And the same may be said of women, who are also put down as inferior. Will women, Vaishyas and Shudras take the lesson? Only education can bring them to see through all this imposition.

THE FATE OF CATHOLICISM.

By "Luigo".

India is the only country where the Catholic is docile and observant. In fact an eminent English Catholic clergyman, whose admiration naturally went ahead of his discretion, burst into privileged words like "How good these Catholics are!" on his first stepping in Bombay and seeing vast herds observing the Sabbath. To a man obviously, whose sorry custom it has been to see both priest and spiritual authority flouted, this came as a pleasant surprise and, notwithstanding all the craft that it might be his confirmed policy to employ, found dangerous expression.

European Catholics generally, it is said, are hardly worth the name and in whatever way it might suit the Church to term or explain their attitude they are perfectly decided about the rightness of their conduct. In support or commendation of their life they have the beautiful example of the great men of the world, whose eminence and goodness, wisdom and character, the world herself has fully tested before lifting them alive to the "niches" which she has laboured to carve out for them.

The Frenchman could not understand why Alexander Dumas, Victor Hugo and Francois Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire, three of the wisest heads of his country, were on the "Index Prohibitorum." So also those interested in George Bernard Shaw, whose integrity and wisdom even the Church will not dare arraign, are convinced that the cunning contrivance of this apparently helpful "Index" is only a well calculated move to nicely keep away all "thinkers" (or shall we say free thinkers!) from the Catholic mind. Any way the "Index" has been hardly treated with the respect it tactfully called for. Perhaps mainly because of this the European has been able to burst the hard-wrought shackles of the Church, which of course being put to the awful necessity, promises him eternal hell-fire for all this devilish desecration; but pitifully in vain. The human

mind has evolved in spite of all the indescribable tact of its enemy. It has understood that the threat of hell for all eternity, which is intrusively instilled into the Catholic even in the consecrated peace and joy of the cradle, is only an admirable but great psychological plot to make him a helpless thrall in the hands of the Church.

In view of this felicitous awakening all the world over, it may be asked why the Indian Catholic, the son of a land which has never been backward in any sphere of greatness, be it of head or heart, still hugs to his warm bosom a faith which is only an exploitation. The question becomes all the more pointed when the way of his conversion is further considered. The Portuguese brought Christianity to India, with sword and fire, and though many came over from Hinduism with the fear of death and persecution, still many more remained true to the "faith of their fathers" and did definitely consider it holy to defy this bloody way of forcing them into a strange religion.

To-day though the same barbarous method cannot be prosecuted (O, would

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to God it were!) proselytising still goes on among the ignorant, the starving and oppressed, with rich promises which these doomed souls can hardly resist. Abyssinia is a glaring and outrageous point in instance. A clergyman was heard to say the other day that the Holy Ghost was to be thanked a thousand times because the divine spirit had deigned to visit that pagan land. One is quite petrified by the boldness of this impudent dinitary, considering how the world bled to see the way Abyssinia was foully raped. In spite of Russia, Germany and even Italy being lost to the Church (one wonders if this is only because the devil is at last working the way he should and man is more perverse than his forbears) she will still be able to happily show in her next census an increase in her children.

Has the Indian Catholic not yet been awakened to all these awful realities just because he is inferior to the European or is it because his political servitude has created in him a reverence for the white

man which will not easily allow of his disentangling himself from the close-woven web in which he has been entailed? The difference between the white man and the black man is so deeply laid even in this tremendously strong fort of a religion that black saints have not yet attracted the Popes, or if they have, it has been infallibly attested that black is not the colour that makes for virtue or beautifies the altars. Or for the matter of that, even the Church authorities, like the governors or viceroy, must be white men. In the case of the latter of course there is reason for the position by way of their being the rulers, but why should only white men be ecclesiastical heads when the Church makes it her boast that she is no respecter of persons!

The Indian Catholic has a further reason to doubt the church (just as any others) because her Genesis and many other teachings which she is so authentic (but not so happy) about have been

(Continued on Page 29).

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An Appeal For "The Best of Causes"

The Rationalist Association of India was formed in 1930 "To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country." It has for the last eight years been the vanguard of the Free-thought movement in this country. It has served as an organisation of all those who stand for freedom of thought, speech, publication and action.

"REASON" the official journal of the Association has, throughout its chequered career since 1931, been the medium for the free, frank, and fearless expression of views and opinions, advocating freedom of thought, intellectual honesty and social justice.

It has in its contents and literary standard gained the approbation of eminent freethinkers both in this country and abroad.

In 1934 Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Editor Emeritus, was prosecuted for blasphemy. His acquittal vindicated the freedom of the Press, and is a landmark in the history of religious controversy in India.

With regard to politics, the Rationalist Association of India and its journal "Reason" has the same attitude as that of the World Union of Freethinkers. We are concerned with Politics only in so far as political doctrine entrenches on Freethought.

BIRTH CONTROL PROTEST MEETING.

A meeting under the auspices of the Birth Control League, Poona, was held on December 29, 1938, at the Blavatsky Lodge Hall, to answer the arguments against Birth Control put forward by two ministers in the Bombay Legislative Assembly.

Dr. R. P. Paranjpye presided. The speakers were Dr. A. S. Erulkar, Dr. (Mrs.) Dadabhoy, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and Prof. R. D. Karve.

A bill was recently introduced in the Bombay Legislative Assembly to the effect that Government should make arrangements to disseminate knowledge about modern methods

In order to enable the R. A. I. to increase its activities to achieve its aim and objects and to establish it on a firm financial basis a RESERVE FUND has been started. It is required to collect a sum of Rs. 15,000/- which will be so invested as to yield a regular income per year.

There is no need to state all that will be possible with the aid of this Fund. Nor is it necessary to stress the necessity of a well organised Association for the dissemination of knowledge and enlightenment which will aid the intellectual and social progress of this country.

Donations received upto December 15, 1938:

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh	Rs. 100-0-0
Dr. A. S. Erulkar	Rs. 100-0-0
Mr. D. R. D. Wadia	Rs. 100-0-0
Mr. J. M. Cooper	Rs. 50-0-0
Lt. Col. K. C. Sanjana	Rs. 25-0-0
Principal H. V. Hampton	Rs. 10-0-0
Mr. J. R. Labelle	Rs. 5-0-0
"Heaven"	Rs. 13-6-0
Nur Jehan Azad	Rs. 5-0-0
A Sympathiser	Rs. 5-0-0

Total Rs. 413-6-0

We are still very very far from the amount necessary. We hope friends who have not yet donated to the Fund will contribute whatever they think the cause deserves.

Abraham Solomon.
Jt: Hon. Secretary, R.A.I.

of Birth Control among the masses. It was thrown out, opposed tooth and nail by the Congress Party, it appears owing to pressure from influential quarters, though some of those who opposed it are known to have been in favour of it. One curious fact pointed out by Dr. Erulkar was that the minister for Health, the Hon'ble Dr. M. D. D. Gilder, dealt with the economic aspect, while the finance minister, the Hon'ble Mr. Morarji Desai, dealt with the medical aspect.

A letter on behalf of the R.A.I. has been sent to both the ministers to meet the representatives of the Association in a Public debate on Birth Control.

A. S.

REASON

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Editor :

Prof. R. D. Karve, M. A.

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Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

The writers of the articles in this journal are themselves responsible for the views expressed and do not implicate the Rationalist Association of India in any way.

All contributions, correspondence, press cuttings, journals in exchange, enquiries regarding advertisement rates etc. should be addressed to Mr. Abraham Solomon Asstt. Editor, "REASON," 59, Karmali Building, Arthur Road, Bombay II.

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NOTES AND NEWS

By Abraham Solomon

Greetings to fellow-freethinkers and friends.

One attractive thing about India is the number of "New Years" which one can enjoy within the period of 365 days. Not long ago we had the Parsee New Year, popularly known as "Pateti" followed by the Jewish, which we dare say was celebrated with mingled feelings by the "Chosen People" all over the world. Our deepest sympathies are with the hapless Jews in their tragic plight. Then we had "Dipavali"—the festival of light—the Hindu New Year. One does not need telling twice to enjoy oneself, provided, of course, one has the means. and during the above-mentioned festival, with its multi-coloured electric lights which have taken the place of ancient

oil lamps, the bang of the beautiful fireworks with which India proclaimed her festive joy, gave ample proof of this. During those few days it was light and more light, which only reminded us of the want of light. But the majority of the people of this country seem to like only the light which begins with a "bang" and ends in "smoke."

And now, as we write, another gala season is in full swing. Thank goodness we have not to fight for our "Sunday Cinemas." At least this is the one time of the year in India when everybody tucks his pet religious beliefs into some corner (except, of course, the decimal point followers of Christianity) and thinks of nothing else but having a good time.

But at present there is also another important occasion we are thinking of—the Annual General Meeting of the R. A. I. and particularly the dinner that follows which provides an opportunity for fellow rationalists to pass a few pleasant hours together. Co-secretary David is thinking of all the best hotels in Bombay, with one eye on Treasurer Wadia who, by the way, does not seem to be quite satisfied with the bank account. And one can't blame him either, as friends will see when we publish the accounts next month.

The outlook, as far as our journal "Reason" is concerned, compared with previous years, we can safely say, seems quite hopeful, thanks to Business Manager Husein without whose help we could not have dreamt of publishing "Reason" twice a month. But he too is not quite satisfied. Will not those of our members who are businessmen help by advertising in "Reason"? We offer concession rates to members of the R.A.I.

Indefatigable Dr. D'Avoine is as energetic as ever, and no article or letter in any local papers deriding Rationalism passes unchallenged by his critical pen. He entered the sixty-third year on December 4 and we wish him renewed energy and many more years with us.

Our old friend, Col. Sanjana of Poona sends us his subscription for 1939, in advance as usual, not forgetting to add a fiver for the Reserve Fund and another fiver for the General Fund, all accompanied by a few encouraging clearly written words which do matter a lot to us.

Distance makes no difference to free-thinkers. The keen interest taken in the R.A.I. and our journal "Reason" by our friends in other parts of the world, is remarkable. We thank our distinguished friends Mr. Vivian Phelps, of Capetown, South Africa, author of "The Churches and Modern Thought," and Dr. Har Dayal, England, for their help. And Mr. S. W. Willatts, New Queensland, Australia, for subscription in advance for 1939, donation and the many encouraging and interesting letters he writes us.

And last but certainly not least, the silent workers for the cause of Free-thought who prefer to remain unmentioned but are our bulwark against disappointment.

We expect to have our General Meeting in the first week of February and hope it will be well attended. Accounts for 1937 which have not been published and those for 1938 will be published together immediately after the General Meeting.

By the way, Treasurer Wadia asks us to remind members of the R.A.I. to send in their subscriptions, which will save V.P.P. charges and much trouble.

Dr. V. J. Gomes, 5, Synagogue Street, Poona wishes to get in touch with fellow-rationalists in that place. Friends should kindly write to him at his above address.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine's new address is "Gool House" Cirrus Avenue, Byculla, Bombay 8.

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The Secretaries,

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thrown into her very teeth by the world's wisest men in spite of bitter persecution and the dungeon. To-day every child learns in school things which the great and wise Church once condemned and ridiculed.

Galileo, as every one knows, was handled brutally because he discovered something which shook the foundation of Peter like an earthquake. But the great Galileo, at whose name the world bows in reverence, was not the only sorry instance of this heavy and dastardly instrument of a hopeless struggle for existence.

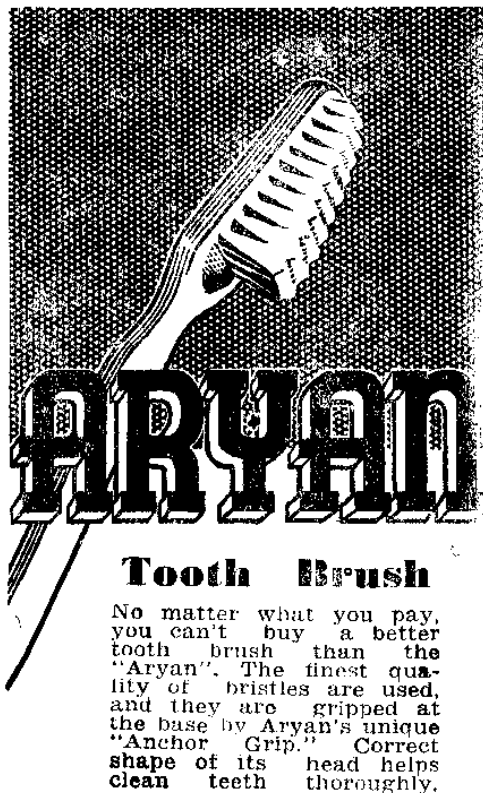
It is not at all surprising therefore that the rule of the Church has lasted so long if one only considers how it desperately crushes all that comes in her way. Can anyone forget that this divinely begotten institution perpetrated during the Inquisition crimes at which even the savagery of Barrabas would have looked

aghast? Will anyone fail to envisage what becomes of a man with whom the fear of eternal hellfire has grown from childhood till it is even the subject of his dreams? Can anyone doubt that Catholics remain stupidly obedient and dangerously ignorant when the world's greatest thinkers are kept away from them? These and many more reasons, like an awfully strong financial position, establish the rule of the Church. No doubt that it is only the greatest like Voltaire or Spinoza who have the concentrated strength to resist this carefully fed virus which holds humanity in thralldom.

The intolerance of the Church is the worst ever known and not even Nero when he threw the Christians to the lions could have been more fierce than the Church at one time against any son who had renounced this mother because he thought that such a mother was not worthy of such a son. The days of the Church when she was at the height of her temporal power can never be forgotten for they were frightful days when anyone who spoke against her or doubted her teachings met all the ferocity and beastliness that her ingenuity could hunt out. To think against her is absolutely prohibited and she will work tooth and nail against any thinker or scientist, obviously not because the poor, doting mother is so concerned about the salvation of her children, but on the contrary because the rock of Peter is not so hard or firm as she makes it to be. If the gates of hell can never prevail against her, why would she demonstrate signs of such a frightful ferocity to resist all reasonable reasoning and make for herself dark and ugly blots in the pages of the History of the Human race?

Many wise Indians are beginning to doubt this mighty and awfully tactful organisation, which interferes in everything, even politics and war. The Bombay Catholic Diocesan Weekly is untiringly advocating the plea that one cannot remain a true Catholic and a true Congressman all at once. What is this

(Continued on Page 32).



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FREETHOUGHT IN INDIA

By Abraham Solomon.

The following report was read at the 25th International Freethought Congress held in London in September, 1938.

Though there were many rationalists scattered all over India, some of them members of the Rationalist Press Association of London, it was not until 1930 that the Rationalist Association of India was formed.

In addition to the usual difficulties experienced by pioneers of the freethought movement in other parts of the world, the two great difficulties to be faced here are—(1) Language, and (2) Illiteracy.

Of the whole population (about 370,000,000) only 8% are literate, i.e. can read and write, and hardly 1% know English.

Besides, due to the large number of different religions in India, an attack on a particular religion has a very limited effect, as those belonging to other faiths view it with unconcern.

In India, religion for the common man consists mainly of mere ritual, and any alteration in it is regarded as deadly heresy.

Strange as it may seem, far from raising doubts as to which religion is true, the various religions are viewed as different paths leading to the worship of one and the same Supreme Being, while those lower in the scale of education hold that their religion alone is true.

Due to this and other reasons mentioned later, rationalists have to direct their attack more or less on the belief in the supernatural and the belief in immortality.

The two great religions of India as everyone knows are Hinduism with crude idol worship at one end and practically atheism at the other end, and Islamism. The former claiming by far the vast majority of the population and the latter no less than 7 or 8 crores.

Due to the higher percentage of education among the Hindus and the peculiar character of Hinduism itself, there is a greater tendency towards Rationalism among them than among the others.

Despite the grotesque mythology, senseless rituals, and idols, Hinduism is elastic enough to admit to its fold all shades of belief. We see at the top learned pundits with pretensions to philosophic and even scientific knowledge, in the centre the semi-educated with their strange mysticism and superstition, and at the bottom ignorant villagers whose only religious conceptions are the worship of various idols and the practice of idiotic ceremonies.

But the spread of education is accompanied by a growing indifference to religion which needs to be supplemented by rational and scientific knowledge and the inculcation of a scientific outlook, especially amongst the youth.

The Moslems are the most bigoted and resemble the Catholics in many ways. The percentage of education is very low and they display the fanaticism prevalent in the days of the inquisition. Koran is still read in Arabic though most of the Mahomedans do not understand Arabic. The children are taught to read the Koran mechanically.

Still with all this, there are rationalists among the Mahomedans who dare to revolt often with fatal and disastrous consequences.

The Christians very much resemble the Mahomedans in their ignorance and bigotry. Their conversion to Christianity was more a matter of a step higher on the ladder of social status than the truth or appeal of the Christian religion.

The Parsis, or the followers of Zoroaster, are few in number. Though the percentage of education is high, this community is still full of diehard bigots and the spread of education does not seem to have done away with the virus of religious fanaticism.

And last but not least, the social pressure exerted by the superstitious mental attitude, vested interests and the

blasphemy laws, go a great way in suppressing freedom of thought in this country and prevent many freethinkers from actively associating themselves with the freethought movement in India.

The political movement in India distracts much of the attention of the people from Rationalism and cognate subjects; at the same time it has also served to awaken them, to a certain extent, to the harmful effects of Religion.

All these difficulties with the present transitory social and political state of India, serve to impede the progress of the freethought movement in this country.

Most of the freethought literature published in the West is concerned with expressing the fallacies of Christianity and hence does little to help the spread of Rationalism in India.

The Rationalist Association of India, though existing for the last eight years, has still to struggle for its existence. To-day the Association exists, thanks to the extraordinary exertions of its stauncher members, especially the younger blood, who are determined that it shall not become extinct.

We feel that a proper co-ordination of forces, working for the cause of intellectual freedom and progress in the East and West will be a definite step forward in the progress of the World Freethought Movement.

The task before the pioneers of freethought in India is a formidable one. The Rationalist Association of India being financially weak renders the task all the more difficult.

But the conviction that though the throned power of superstition and injustice may conquer for a while, no form of tyranny or superstition has ever found itself able to permanently check the development of Freethought and the impetus of accumulated knowledge, fills us with hope.

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blasphemy laws, go a great way in suppressing freedom of thought in this country and prevent many freethinkers from actively associating themselves with the freethought movement in India.

The political movement in India distracts much of the attention of the people from Rationalism and cognate subjects; at the same time it has also served to awaken them, to a certain extent, to the harmful effects of Religion.

All these difficulties with the present transitory social and political state of India, serve to impede the progress of the freethought movement in this country.

Most of the freethought literature published in the West is concerned with expressing the fallacies of Christianity and hence does little to help the spread of Rationalism in India.

The Rationalist Association of India, though existing for the last eight years, has still to struggle for its existence. To-day the Association exists, thanks to the extraordinary exertions of its stauncher members, especially the younger blood, who are determined that it shall not become extinct.

We feel that a proper co-ordination of forces, working for the cause of intellectual freedom and progress in the East and West will be a definite step forward in the progress of the World Freethought Movement.

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"To combat all religious and social beliefs and customs that cannot stand the test of Reason and to endeavour to create a scientific and tolerant mentality among the people of this country."

Objects of the Rationalist Association of India.

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REASON AND POLITICS

By

R. D. KARVE

There is a very widespread idea that rationalist writers should eschew politics, since there may be rationalists belonging to any political party. This may perhaps be sometimes considered advisable as a policy, in order to avoid splits between rationalists, but there can be no reason whatsoever for not considering politics on general principles. It may perhaps be argued that the first requisite for scientific reasoning is a regard for truth, and as politics as practised at present has nothing to do with truth, it is better for scientific writers to leave politics out of consideration. This would be a correct argument if it was assumed that truth is undesirable in politics, as some politicians will certainly openly assert, and the others will prove by their conduct that they agree with this opinion for all practical purposes. Even some rationalists may seriously take the view that since means have to be adapted to ends, it is quite legitimate to cheat your enemies in time of war, and since nobody can say when war will break out, it may be considered legitimate at all times in politics, even if this is not always considered as a preparation for aggressive war, but simply as a defensive measure against wily enemies. Other rationalists may concede this point, at least so long as peace at any price is not agreed on as desirable.

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All this however may be left out of account in considering internal politics, where there is no question of misleading an enemy. But even here, the existence of political parties at war with one another is supposed to be such an essential part of modern politics, that here too, war tactics are considered necessary and all the dishonesty of war propaganda is imported into party politics. All kinds of dishonesty has become such a commonplace in politics that it only raises a smile if anybody speaks of truth in connection with politics. It is true that the Dictator of the Congress party in India declares that Truth and non-violence are the aims of the party. But how are they put into practice? Truth, in Congress parlance, is equivalent to the opinion of the Dictator, who claims that he is possessed of an inner voice, prompted directly by God. He declares that God never leaves him for long in error. And naturally anybody who joins the Congress has to sacrifice his opinions (which cannot be True if they differ from the Dictator's) and give parrot-like expression to the so-called Truth given out by the Dictator! They would indeed make themselves less ridiculous if they stopped at voting at the bidding of the Dictator, and did not attempt to prove his theses by absurd arguments and false statements.

An instance in point is the recent Assembly debate on the Birth-control Bill, in opposing which, the Minister for Public Health, formerly in favour of birth-control, argued against it. He declared that as Napoleon Bonaparte was the eleventh child of his parents, it would be undesirable to have less than that number, since some geniuses may thus be prevented from being born! It happens that Napoleon was only the second child (not fourth, as Dr. Erulkar said by mistake in the recent protest meeting), though even if he had been the eleventh, the argument is worse than silly. Even if the Almighty God gave a promise in writing that every eleventh child would be a genius, that would not counteract the misery caused by the consequent overpopulation. But it is futile to argue with people who are wilfully blind. Another Minister spoke in

favour of self-control as a means of birth-control, as advocated by the Dictator, but he may possibly be a sincere dreamer, however foolish his dreams may be and however great an ignorance of physiology they may imply.

In addition to this, false statistics were pressed into service, as can be seen from the fact that these same congressmen who were once loudly denouncing the British Government for having drained India of its wealth, and lamenting the continued impoverishment of India under British rule, suddenly begin to declare vociferously that the increase in food-products in India is far greater than the increase in population, that the increase in industry is phenomenal, and that from the economic point of view, there is not the slightest need for birth-control. Surely both these statements cannot be true, even if they are uttered by congressmen who claim Truth as their speciality!

As for non-violence, everybody sees it illustrated in lathi-charges and shooting against mill-hands. There may perhaps have been some justification for these, but then where is the distinction between the Congress and other Governments? It would probably be beyond the comprehension of these non-violent people that even their prohibition scheme is a form of violence. Since the Dictator has declared himself for it, it must be necessarily consistent with non-violence!

Party discipline is brought forward as an excuse for voting with the party even when your conscience goes against it. But if such discipline is at all necessary, that party cannot lay any claim to truth, except as defined above, viz. that Truth is the opinion of the Dictator. Party discipline is not consistent with truth. It is a voluntary abandonment of truth, and such a party lies doubly in shouting truth as its slogan. In respect of truth, it is no better than any other party, and much worse in pretending that its policy is Truth.

Steadfastness under persecution says much for the sincerity and still more for the tenacity of the believer, but very little for the objective truth of that which he believes.

—T. H. Huxley.

CATHOLICISM IN SPAIN

By Dr. C. L. D'Avoine

Under the above caption there appeared an article in the French paper "L'Humanite" of the 18th December last by P. L. Darnar which makes interesting reading.

It deals with the prospects of the revival of Catholicism in Spain under Franco and it reveals the fact that disillusionment about this is fast spreading in the Nationalist camp. Even the sincerity of that General for the cause he ostensibly espoused is in doubt, for it is now obvious to all but the stupid, that General Franco is nothing else than the puppet of Hitler and Mussolini. As Hitler has declared himself a deadly enemy of Catholicism and it is clear that Mussolini is only making use of religion as a cloak for his own ends, Franco's championship of Catholicism in Spain must necessarily appear in a suspicious light, unless in this particular respect he is in direct opposition to Hitler's bent towards Catholicism which is most unlikely. P. L. Darnar says that no less a person than Monsieur de Kerillis, the French Catholic deputy and journalist, who till recently was one of the most ardent supporters of Franco in France, is now shaky about the prospects of Catholicism in Spain and about the sincerity of Franco for that religion. It would appear that he is now turning anxious eyes towards Spain and wondering what is going to happen in that land famous for its superstitions and fanaticism. He confesses that until recently he firmly believed that Franco was serious in his announcement that he was determined to restore Catholicism in a manner that would satisfy both the Clergy and the Catholics of Spain. Recent events, it would appear, have compelled him to change his views. "Are not his anxieties and doubts", asks P. L. Darnar, "those of the Church herself, from the Pope who since last spring took alarm at the relations of Burgos with Hitler and Mauras and the Catholics of the Iberian Peninsula who now have grave misgivings about Franco's sincerity?" French Catholics also are now greatly alarmed to see the possibility of their

south frontier being encircled as Hitler has threatened to do in his "Mein Kampf".

This anxiety about Franco's sincerity is particularly widespread among the Basque Catholics, so terribly decimated by the Moors, and among the Catholics of the Archdiocese of the Primate of Catalonia. No Catholic, indeed, is ignorant of what the Catholic paper "La Croix" recently stated, namely: "At Burgos they are growing anxious at the increasing opposition Franco is experiencing" (We learn in a subsequent issue of "L'Humanite" that 2000 persons including many of his officers were recently shot by Franco for mutiny. In a recent issue of the Evening News of India the number is said to be 700).

This anxiety is also felt among the High Clergy and it is significant, says P. L. Darnar, that the prayer recently offered all over Nationalist Spain was "For Peace" and not "For Victory". Cardinal Goma and several of his confreres have just reminded the people in Spain that they were not only Spanish Catholics, but also Roman Catholics, which is interpreted as a warning that

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Franco is making use of religion for his own political ends pure and simple, as he is bent on following the dictates of Hitler and Mussolini in every respect. It is also very significant, says P. L. Darnar, that the Papal Encyclicals denouncing Hitler's atrocities and upbraiding Mussolini for his Anti-Semitic designs were forbidden entry into Franco's territory. There is no denying the fact that the eyes of the Catholics in Spain are being opened to the dangerous move Franco is making against the Church herself. Catholics in this country who are bottle-fed by Catholic publications here would do well to realize the true state of affairs in Spain. These poor simpletons here believe anything they read in their Catholic papers and they have become strong supporters of Franco simply because they readily believe all what the priestly supporters of Franco tell them here. So bitter are the Spanish Catholics growing against Franco that Francisco G. de Mardones Zabalandithoeetxca, (What a name!), General Secretary of the Basque Chris-

tian Syndicate says, in a pamphlet prefaced by Gaston Tessier, General Secretary of the French Christian Workers' Association, that already since 1934 when a Christian Minister, since shot by Franco, moved a social law in the Spanish Chamber, Lamanie de Clairae made the following declaration: "If in the name of the Pope, they clip my property, I shall turn a Greek Schismatic". This sort of feeling is becoming widespread in the Nationalist territory and it bodes no good for Franco.

The Rev. Father Leon Merklen writes in "La Croix": One must refer to call Franco's campaign which is ostensibly in favour of Catholicism a Crusade. It is nothing more than a political scramble for power which is compromising the very interest of Catholicism itself."

Father Merklen admits that the Hitlerian influence is getting daily stronger in Spain and Franco's downright servility to Hitler is only too apparent for one to have any illusion about it. He explains that this is the reason why the

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Pope's condemnation of Hitler was not heard of in Spain. It was due to the pressure of Hitler himself. On the other hand, says Father Merklen, the counterblasts of Hitler, Rosenberg and Streicher against the Pope were translated and broadcasted all over Nationalist Spain!

Senator Serrano Suner, brother in law of Franco and Minister of the "Interior in the Franquish government" is, says Father Merklen, a strong Pro-Hitler. He does not hide his strong sympathy for the German National Socialism which the Pope, of course, detests.

It is significant that the views of such a Catholic as Father Merklen have now veered towards Republican Spain. Father Merklen says that the Republican Government tolerates religion, and is certainly not against Catholicism. Father Merklen goes further; he denounces Franco in scathing terms and warns his readers that one is easily labelled "Red" in Spain if one happens not to agree with Franco's policy.

The French Paper says that even if Franco should win, which it considers is a remote possibility, his task in Spain will not be smooth and rosy. He has arranged too many forces against him, and has created implacable enemies. His bombardment of the civil population and the massacre of innocent women and children has created so much bitterness against him that his name will be execrated for generations to come.

BY THE WAYSIDE

By Ali Akbar.

Religious Teaching in Schools

"The New Review" of January 1939 contains a well-thought out article on "The education for India" by Rev. T. N. Siqueira. He discusses the various factors that have marred the educational progress of this country and suggests remedies. One of them is the introduction of religious teaching in schools, because "without it India loses one of her richest sources of self-development". He deplores that students "see Catholicism through Protestant spectacles" and

that they are never given a chance "to study their own religions rationally and systematically and test the doctrines and practices handed down by their elders". According to the author the only persons that can teach a religion rationally and systematically are its own devotees. I wonder how much of rationalism can be expected of them. If they have no bias for their own religion they have one against other religions. Every religious teacher thinks that the priest of another religion is his enemy and not fair towards him. Otherwise why should Rev. Sequeira feel uncomfortable if Catholicism is seen through Protestant spectacles?

Religious instruction is, even now, being imparted in many schools, and what is the result of what is being taught? The practice of religion is inculcated and this boils down to the mumbling of prayers, attending certain services and observing certain fasts. It is this practice, with the added zeal that comes out of spiritual fervour, that is responsible for the crowds that gather at the Maidan for their Id prayers,—prayers which are followed by communal riots on the least provocation, for the open sacrifice of cows on the Bakri Id day, in spite of the feelings of orthodox Hindus, for the crowds that flock to Pandharpur and to Allahabad to do obeisance before an image of a god or to bathe in the holy waters of the Ganges, however those waters may have been previously defiled, for the devotee that wades through the filth of the outskirts of the temple to kill a goat and offer its blood to the divine Kali. "Tut, tut, my friend, this is not religion, this is not what is important; these are the practices that must be shed" would probably say the priest. That has been said so often before. Is it really done? Is any attempt made towards it? Far from it. Considering the way the world is going, these mass behaviours will be fostered and encouraged.

To talk of teaching religion rationally and of allowing the students to test the doctrines and practices handed down by their elders is BUNK. Rev. Siqueira concludes this part of his essay by saying

that "a religion that cannot stand the searching test of rational study is not worth holding and will certainly not be held beyond childhood." This is just what happens to all religions. All those that make a rational study of religion desert it. It is because most of the eminent educationalists have discovered that the religions of today are not worth holding that they are not attaching any importance to religious teaching in schools or colleges. It is wasting the child's time and the parent's money if he is to be taught something which has to be shed later. If teaching an atheistic religion like Buddhism or a bigoted one like Mohemadanism or Catholicism to different students is to have the same effect, namely to produce good social human beings, why cannot our children be just brought up in those basic ethical principles of good society which are common to all religious teachings but have no religious sanction behind them at all? Our religious convictions and practices have divided us into groups and any further teaching of religion will tend to perpetuate these groups.

Catholic tradition on war.

Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax at the end of their talks with the Duce which only produced 'negative results' had an audience with His Holiness the Pope. The two British statesmen had gone to Rome in search of peace. Not having found it, they drove across the Vatican. We are so far in the dark as to what the result was. If positive, perhaps the algebraic sum of the Italian episode may not be zero. At one of the recent lunches of the Rotary Club of Bombay, His Grace the Archbishop of Bombay talked on the Catholic traditions on war. He informed us that the conditions laid down by the Catholic Church for a just war were a "just cause, such as a grave injury, invasion and the absence of any other means of vindicating justice". We are also glad to read that there has arisen a new school of "Catholic pacifism" which holds the view that it is practically impossible for a modern war to be justified. One does not know the time-lag between the pre-

sent and the future when the Holy See will be roused from its tranquility to declare modern warfare unjust. We have seen the rape of Abyssinia, the loot of China, the crushing of Czechoslovakia, and the revolt in Spain. There has not even been a ripple on the Holy See. Are we to conclude that all these wars are just in the eyes of the Church? We are tempted to raise this point because His Grace hinted at the consequences if any war was to be declared unjust by the Holy See. Then 400 million Catholics would not participate in the war. Then we will see one-third of the Germans not co-operating with the Fuhrer, ninety per cent of Italians leaving the Duce to freeze in his black shirt, and the Spaniards watching the bulls staging amateur fights between the trenches. What a glorious step for peace! Yet the Pope is silent. We are aware that guidance has to come from above and the ether may be overcrowded. Leaving aside this, is there any other cause? Is there a fear that the Papal Bull may not be accepted by all his 400 million followers, some of whom are only Catholics in name? Might not many of these flout his order and fight for the flag of their country? There is every chance of this happening and if it does, what a downfall for the head of the Church! In this case silence is golden for the Holy See. What does it matter if the Abyssinians are gassed and eaten by hyenas, if the Chinese children are bombed in their cradles, and if Spanish Reds are destroyed by Catholic Franco's bombs? The angels in heaven will receive the just Catholics and the rest will gnash their teeth in everlasting damnation, which they earn because they were born heathens and died heathens.

The argument against the persecution of opinion does not depend upon what the excuse for persecution may be. The argument is that none of us know all the truth, that the discovery of new truth is promoted by free discussion and rendered very difficult by suppression, and that in the long run, human welfare is increased by the discovery of truth and hindered by action based on error.

—Bertrand Russell.

REASON

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Abraham Solomon

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NOTES AND NEWS.

We regret that the broadcast talk which we were to give as announced in the last issue of 'Reason' was postponed. We are, at the moment not quite certain of the date on which it will be fixed, but it will probably be sometime during next month.

As announced in last issue of "Reason", letters on behalf of the R.A.I. had been sent to Hon'ble Dr. M.D.D. Gilder and the Hon'ble Mr. Morarji Desai to meet the representatives of the R.A.I. in a public debate on Birth-Control. Both of them have refused to do so.

In this case the issue involved was not merely the rightness or otherwise of Birth-control, but far more fundamental one, viz. intellectual honesty and free speech. We thought that a person

of the standing of the Hon'ble Dr. Gilder would not so suddenly change his views on any subject without the backing of sound arguments. But it appears that he does not think it fit to make known the reasons for his change of opinion.

The Annual General Meeting and Dinner of the R.A.I. will be held on Sunday, 19th February. The place and time will be announced later. Friends who can help in making necessary arrangements should please get in touch with co-secretary Mr. Milton David immediately, at the R.A.I. address.

Recently a correspondent in a local paper wrote an article on "Sex and Science" attacking Editor Karve, under a Greeco-Latin hybrid nom-de-plume "Psychologicus." He was properly refuted by Prof. Karve. It appears that his (or her) knowledge of sex is as profound as that of Greek and Latin. It reminds one of the story of a farmer who having thriftily saved some money, sent his son to the Continent for education. When the young hopeful returned, the father asked him "Well, my son! What have you learnt? Do you know Latin?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, let me see. What do you call this table in Latin?"

"'Tabalibus,' father."

"And this chair?"

"'Charibus,' father".

"Well, my sonibus" said the farmer, "take this spadibus, go to the fieldibus and digibus."

Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death:
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages and swells;
And their swords and sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity.

—Shelley.

The place to be happy is here; the time to be happy is now; the way to be happy is by making others so.

—Ingersoll.

MAN'S GREATEST ENEMY

By Chapman Cohen

Reproduced from the "Freethinker"

Who is the greatest enemy of man? The answer may be given in a single word—Himself. Between man and every other force or condition he is fighting we can foresee an end. Earth, air and sea may be conquered, problem after problem may be solved, the reign of plenty may be established, nationalistic tribalism may follow its present line of degradation until it dies amid the disgust it generates. These are all comparatively superficial difficulties that have to be overcome. But the one constant enemy of mankind, the one that is always being subdued, but never quite destroyed, will be man himself. If evolution were understood, instead of merely being talked about, that statement would be accepted as a mere truism. As things stand it is necessary to offer proof.

To begin with it is plain that the human body is, physically, an adapted structure. It is derived from an earlier one, and it has all the imperfections and makeshift arrangements that belong to an old house that has by a series of devices been brought up to date. Specialists in all directions have dwelt upon the faults of the human body, and how much better it would be for modern usage if it had been built for the existing situation. The curious reader will find plenty of evidence to this end in any first class text-book of evolution. The eye, the bony skeleton, the number of rudimentary structures existing within the body, all help to realize the patchwork structure of the body of man. The whole justifies the remark put into the mouth of a king of Castile, that if he had been present at the creation he would have moved an amendment. A great deal of the work of the world has consisted in trying to get amendments to what is said to be the work of God.

* * *

Man and his Past.

But parallel with the truth that man's physical structure is an adapted structure, there is another, and even

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more vital truth that is often overlooked. Man's mentality also represents a continuous adaptation, and like his body carries with it not trails of glory but tendencies inherited from a lower condition of social life. From the aimless groping of the amoeba for food to the planned and purposive action of man to the same end there is no break. The last stage is always an outcome of the preceding one. Behind the language of Shakespeare there lies a trail that leads us back to the animal-like sounds of our earliest ancestors. The last is an expression of what has gone before; different, but in the line of descent, not so different that the ancestry cannot be traced.

There are, however, distinctions that definitely separate a human society from an animal group. As I have pointed out elsewhere, human society is differentiated from animal groups through the formulation of ideas, the creation of customs and the establishment of institutions, all of which are handed on from generation to generation through the medium of a social heredity. There is to-day a general agreement that no great change has taken place in man's physical structure of man for many thousands of years. The school-boy of to-day has neither a better body nor a letter brain than the boys who ran the streets of ancient Egypt. The soldier of to-day is not a better soldier or a braver fighter than the men who marched with Alexander the Great into ancient India. The statesman of to-day is better neither in body nor brain than the statesman of the time of Socrates. Yet the schoolboy can solve problems with ease that an ancient Athenian could not attempt. The soldier can wield powers of which the soldier of ancient times never dreamed; and the statesman has at his command resources that would have seemed miraculous to the statesman of antiquity. Man is the heir of the ages in a sense that has no meaning when applied to the animal world from which man derives. It is this socio-psychological heritage that is the hall mark of human society.

The Nemesis of Man.

There is another feature of human evolution that is of profound importance in dealing with the question in hand. In the animal world such development as takes place meets with no opposition from the group. There is no conscious opposition to change in the animal world. The change, whether it makes for extinction or preservation, goes on without the subjects of it being aware of the process. There is neither a looking backward nor forward. In the case of man there is a very different tale to tell. The proposed change is consciously formulated, for the greater part, at least. And this excites, not merely opposition from others, but also from the individuals themselves. We have to deal here entirely, not with inertia, but with an active resistance to change because it is change. Reform is faced with opposition to reform from within and without, and the incipient reformer discovers, more often than most people realize, that his hardest fight is against his own impulses. Not only the living members of the society in which he lives, but the dead whom he has been brought up to revere are at war with him.

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He has to make a break with the past, and the product is often that compromise and rationalizing which lead to excuses for not "following the light," an attempted justification for compromise or silence.

The chief obstacles to development that man has to face are those of his own making. They are internal, not external. They are the product of that mental activity which creates and destroys, and out of the ruins of the old fashions new and better forms of living. The position may be briefly stated, almost in the words of Bagehot, written some seventy years ago. To exist man must first fashion rules of living. That is a hard enough task, but the next step is harder still. He must summon up enough courage to break the rules that are of his own devising. It is this last step that has always involved and still involves the hardest and bitterest of struggles. All the associations that have gathered round cherished institutions and venerated individuals are united in opposition to the man who sets about the work of iconoclasm. The clamour of the foolish crowd, the outcry of threatened vested interests, financial and other, the foolishness that lies behind a misunderstood loyalty, and a patriotism that is more than the unreasoning sentiment of the pack, all these things the reformer will find at work, fully expressed by others, and to some extent operative in himself. It is this conflict between the perception of what is the better, and inherited tendencies that is responsible for the most painful moments in the life of one who fights for better things. In a far deeper and higher sense than the New Testament writer dreamt of, a man's foes are indeed those of his own household.

The tragedy of human progress lies just here, in the fact that man's enemies are mainly of his own creation. Create them he must, remove them or modify them he must. The very advance he makes brings him into conflict with the advances he has already made. Every institution that man creates sooner or later blocks the road to further advances,

and blocking also the road to their modification or removal are the fears and affections that surround these institutions. It is upon the dead past that the future must be built, but it is also the dead past that forbids the transition from the old to the new. Man is terrified by the ghosts of his own creation. In the early ages of civilization the fear was of the gods. To-day the gods are losing their power, but they have left as a legacy a taboo in the shape of the almost "sacred" character which the unthinking attach to mere custom and to established institutions.

In the recognition of the truth of what has been said lies the justification of a lively and informed scepticism with regard to all established things. I do not mean by this a scepticism which denies the utility of all things established, but one which claims the right to criticize them, and to revise or abolish them when necessary. And to do that we must get rid of the Church-created teaching that it is wrong to question established institutions, of the profoundly

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immoral and anti-social New Testament teaching that the powers that be are ordained of God. We must get back to the Greek conception that every institution, from king to crossing-sweeper, is no more than an experiment in social life. The centuries that lie between us and the Greeks have established the belief that it is "wrong," morally wrong, to question an established institution. An ancient Athenian might have argued that an institution was good or bad, but Greek thought never sank to the primitive notion that any questioning of institutions was a moral offence and distasteful to the gods. The Christian notion that rebellion, as rebellion, is a crime was merely the logical application of the Christian teaching that "the sin of blasphemy is of the nature of treason."

* * *

The Insecurity of Reason.

Reason is the instrument by means of which man finds his way about the world. It is the best he has, but it is a long way from being infallible. It leads and it misleads. The division of people into those who believe in following their reason and those who do not is very misleading. A man may follow his reason to illogical conclusions as well as to logical ones. To do the Roman Church justice, it never condemned the use of reason; it was the use of **unlawful** reasoning that was anathema, and this was on the fairly safe ground that reason might as readily mislead as act as a safe guide to truth. Here, the Roman Catholic Church might have met its Freethinking enemies on much nearer their own ground than it did usually. Nature certainly does flatter to deceive. The earth is not flat, although appearances suggest that it is. The stars are not near the earth, although that appears a quite reasonable conclusion to unsophisticated mankind. The world seems full of evil agencies, their activities being somewhat mitigated by the efforts of good ones. The presence of indwelling demons as a cause of disease is quite an attractive theory to savages and certain modern

bishops. If there were a God, and if he created the world with a deliberate intention to mislead mankind, that is one effort for which he could certainly claim credit for a considerable measure of success.

Reason thus leads by misleading. We develop a craving for understanding and gratify it by creating misunderstanding. This is no fanciful paradox, it is the expression of a literal truth. For in the end it is the urge of the insatiable desire for more complete understanding and for a more perfect life—which has its roots in dissatisfaction, fed by the conception of something better—that is responsible for human progress. And better still, ends become means here as elsewhere. There is created an independent love of itself, a joy in mere discovery that outweighs a hundred disappointments, and so firmly lays the foundations for further development.

We come back to our main theme. Man's real enemy is himself. Things that are outside him, and form no integral part of him—difficulties of food, climate, geographical position, etc.—are one after the other being mastered. But things to which in terms of his past history he has given birth—the gods and ghosts he has called into being, the taboos he has made, the unreasoning reverence for institutions he has created, these represent forces that tax his power for advancement to the uttermost. And this struggle is unending. For however high the level of human culture may be, the elements of this contest will be there. The past will continue to dog the present and attempt to hold it where it is, and the present will continue to reach forward into the future, seeing visions and dreaming dreams. It is man who creates the conditions of this eternal conflict which will last as long as human nature. For man to destroy these conditions is impossible. He can strive only to understand them, and in understanding them, guard against the mischievous action of the creatures of his own brain.

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Vol. VII No. 5 February 1, 1939

Anna I.

THE ONLY TRUE RELIGION

By

R. D. KARVE

In spite of the fact that there is nothing so ludicrous as conceit, people will still, in all naivete, claim a unique position for their country, their religion, their national heroes. Theirs is the best country in the world, their heroes the most valiant, and their religion is the only true religion. Even so-called Indian reformers often have recourse to the authority of religious books to prove their theses. Sometimes they are genuinely unable to give up the habit of looking to antiquity as a source of inspiration, sometimes they do it as a matter of policy. Tilak, for instance, was not orthodox in his own conduct, but wrote a commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita to prove that it was essentially a call to activity in this world. The Mahatma claims to derive his creed of Truth and non-violence and all the rest of it from the same source, which, however, badly lets him down as we have seen. Other well-known Indians like Dayanand, Vivekanand, Arvind Ghosh and Radhakrishnan have claimed a supreme position for the "Sanatana Dharma", the eternal religion, though the word "sanatana" may also mean "ancient".

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A more recent attempt to re-interpret this ancient religion has been made in a recent Marathi book called "Amcha Sanatana Dharma" (Our Ancient Religion) written by one Mr. Mohani, who claims to have proved that the essence of the Hindu religion is to make an organized and sustained effort for social welfare, and that even a belief in God is not necessary as a basis for this religion, which constitutes a claim to distinction in his opinion. He also praises the diversity of sects and gods and modes of worship in Hinduism as indicating liberality of mind, which compares favourably with the narrowness of other religions which have only one god and one religious book apiece.

As was to be expected, the author has been attacked by both the orthodox and the modern. An orthodox shastri of Nagpur, in reviewing the book, has divided modern reformers into two classes, viz. those who frankly go in for western ideas without caring for orthodoxy at all, and those who are not quite so bold and try to placate their orthodox friends by pretending to find support for western ideas in their ancient scriptures. He roundly abuses this latter class and puts them in the same category as Christian missionaries who carry on their propaganda by writing pamphlets purporting to give the story of Rama or Krishna or Ganapati and trying to prove the superiority of Christianity. The comparison can hardly be sound, since missionaries certainly do not try to derive Christianity from these stories! Of course the shastri is polite enough to say that this particular author is not dishonest himself, but has been influenced by other writers who pretend to find their own ideas in the scriptures by misinterpreting ancient texts. He is particularly angry at the idea that a belief in God is not necessary for Hinduism. There is nothing surprising in this, though atheism is not so entirely unknown in Hinduism as this gentleman would have us believe.

What is surprising is the attack from the modern point of view, which is also launched by another shastri, Tarkatirtha Laxmanshastri Joshi, who, though well-trained in all the orthodox lore, has acquired entirely radical views and is

therefore well-qualified to deal with any attempts to tamper with ancient texts. And what is still more surprising is that this attack is published by the "Loka-shikshana", a monthly magazine of rather orthodox tendencies. This critic finds fault with all the eminent reformers mentioned above for trying to base all their ideas on ancient books which, he says, were all very well in their day and which undoubtedly marked an advance at that time, but which are necessarily found woefully wanting in modern times. What is the use of calling your own religion the only effective antidote to the evils of modern materialism when mullas and padres say the same things about theirs? Do the superlative adjectives applied to every religion by its followers really mean anything? Are they not rather like the superlatives used to boom every cinema film by every producer? He does not admit the distinction drawn by the author between his religion, whose aim according to him is social good, and the others which refer exclusively to the other world. No interpretation can get rid of the fact that even the Hindu religion does principally refer to the other world. What is prescribed as religious behaviour may incidentally bring happiness in this world, but that is not its main object.

And he proceeds to attack this prescribed religious conduct in no half-hearted fashion. Writers of Smritis declare that if a Shudra adopts the life of a higher caste, it means ever-lasting hell for him. Manu in particular asserts that if a Shudra drinks cow's milk and studies the Vedas, he is a sinner and suffers horrible torture after death. The great epic Mahabharata supports this view. It gives long lists of people who go to hell or heaven, and this depends on the observance or non-observance of caste restrictions.

He goes on to say that all religions are founded on ideas about things not perceptible by the senses and Hinduism is no exception. It imagines different gods and goddesses corresponding to wind, rain, lightning, mountains, seas, the sky, the sun and the moon and that they control the lives of human beings.

It attributes love, hatred and other feelings to these gods and tells you how to propitiate them by means of sacrifices, in which they are offered different animals and other articles of food by dropping them into the sacrificial fire, the fire-god acting as the carrier. All these were meant as a means of securing a place in heaven and it is absurd to pretend that these have anything to do with social welfare.

It is one thing to say that social welfare should be the goal to be aimed at and quite another to pretend that it was actually the goal of orthodox Hinduism. From that standpoint, Hinduism is as bad as any other religion. Of course religions always try to combine material and so-called spiritual good if possible and often lay down elaborate rules of conduct for every-day life. But it is certainly not true to say that that is the primary aim of religion. Social behaviour has to be based on other grounds than that of this or that religion. It is not possible to make much progress if one has to be looking back all the time at what our ancestors have done or thought. It is essential that reformers should look ahead rather than backward. The world will not wait for them. They have to see that it does not leave them back.

SCIENCE AND THE INFINITE

By M. V. V. K. Rangachari

No number of finite quantities piled up by 'and' can reach the top of infinity. The infinite cannot mathematically be reached by the addition of units. We are yet too far remote from the properties of infinity to evaluate its contents by additions and subtractions of finite quantities thereto and therefrom. One plus one plus one can never reach infinity, however huge the progression. Infinity plus one is infinity, and infinity minus one is yet infinity. Finite quantities lose their usual values in relation to it. We can comprehend only finite quantities and work out formulae for their operation. The infinite remains incomprehensible, either in terms of the symbolic mathematical values, or in the more concrete language of the earth, of things extended in space and moving in time. By the

synthetic process of the typical dialectician above mentioned, we may achieve practical agreement with the rest of the world, and make life worth living in a tolerable practical environment, leaving alone our position in relation to infinity at the respectable distance that inheres in it.

On the other side of the scale is the minus-infinity, whose mystery becomes patent when we try to picture to ourselves the absolute zero. I am unable to stand the absence of everything, conceptually. If you go on withdrawing everything from the mind, every concept possible, by denouncing it "not, this," "not this" (*Neti, Neti, Neti*, as was said by Sankara Acharya), you must reach a stage when you require to stand on something assertive: "It is This". A mere negative, *per se*, leads nowhere, except in relation to some positive asseveration which it is sought to deny. Thus after eliminating, the Upanishads, the philosophical section of the Vedas, postulate *Om Tat Sat*.

The divinity of sound, *Shabda Brahma*, has often been adverted to. "Om" is the origin of movement in the

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universe. The beginning of the oscillation of waves in the wave-mechanical theory, the shooting of the first photon of the quantum theory, the first round of the electron traversed in the universe, the separation of the four dimensional space-time continuum into its components of position in space or extension, and momentum or movement in time, that is "Om". "Om" began the drawing of the world-line by That which is beyond, and which is not this, anywhere within our grasp. But withal, Sat stands for existence. Existence of what? It is not of anything in particular, such as we are accustomed to think of. We think of existence of something, in relation to something; our knowledge of existence is relative. We only perceive events possessing the world-line, localised somewhere, lasting some time. But of existence, absolute, we are unable to grasp anything. Abstract existence is the philosopher's stone. Yet, we begin with that. *Neti, Neti, Neti*, not this nor this nor this, but That which lies beyond, which is Absolute Existence—It is Mon-

ism, an Ideal Monism which would deny reality to everything that is in the Universe, but looks beyond extension and motion, clutching at a concept which is bodiless, the thinker, the thought and the process of thinking all in one.

The mentalism of Sankara has echoes far and near. Bishop Berkeley and Leibnitz approach more or less a similar position. The material universe is an unreality, Mind the only reality. The apparent reality of matter is an illusion. But mark, whose illusion? The illusion of the Mind, reigning supreme and alone, the Mind in which, to quote Sir James Jeans (*The Mysterious Universe*, p. 137) "the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts." But the Mind of the Ideal Monist has nothing to deceive beside itself, or as Max Muller points out (*Six Systems of Philosophy*, p. 185) "There is always something on which illusion (*Vivarta*) is at work, and which cannot be deprived of its reality." A self-deceptive Mind is an abominable postulate.

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But we would be doing injustice to ourselves were we to ignore the place that belongs rightly to idealistic illusion. Illusion is a fact in life, however awkward its recognition. The advance of science progressively reveals the character and extent of such illusion. The flatness of the earth, the notion that this planet was the centre of the universe—the geocentric view as it is called—the apparent motion of the sun and the stars, in fact, the very continuity of our skin, and the density of the particles in their arrangement in the stone, are illusions that better knowledge helped to prick. The presentation of the ideal drags our picture of the real somewhere near its objective correspondence. In fact, we have no assurance of objective reality apart from our apprehension of it subjectively, through our senses, corrected by reason. The notion of reality is itself an illusion apart from such glimpses as we may have of it relative to our power of apprehension, which ought to be at best the cumulative resultant of the expressions of the experience of the race.

We start with Sat, Existence, *per se*, in the absolute, as if it were a defined concept. We know it is unqualified, and hence incomprehensible. We begin to use these adjectives as if they constituted the qualifications of the supreme. Whatever adjective we may bring up, like impersonal, attributeless (Nirguna), unmodified (nirvikara), undeveloped (Avyakta), or unevolved, we seem yet to delimit an absolute entity, and bring Him down from the throne. Even the colourless, odorless, tasteless, Existence (Sat) has its counterpart (asat) non-existence, and divinity to be divine ought to remain detached from both. The Gita (IX, 19) recognises this, and sings "Being and non-being am I, Oh, Arjuna. (Sat asatchaham Arjuna.) There is yet another logical alternative, viz: neither Being nor non-being. The Gita sings that also. (Na sattanna-saduchyate, XIII, 13). "I am neither Being nor non-being." Thus God is existence, non-existence, one, both, as well as neither. Human synthesis cannot ascend further. To agree with San-kara in his definition of **Neti, Neti, Neti**,

(not this, nor this, nor this) is not necessarily to eschew the other mode of approach, and this, and this, and this, and all this, and also That. And this is equal to that, and that is not anything apart from this.

(To be Continued)

BY THE WAYSIDE

OUR ATTITUDE TO SUFFERING

One of the notable advances of modern civilisation is our attitude towards suffering. Religion glorified suffering and pain because it could not explain them away in a satisfactory manner. I do not like the idea of a god who loves you and still feels delighted when you cringe before him, and you are less than a worm, and of his own likeness! It cannot be even vanity; pure sadism is more likely.

Still there are a number who honestly believe that suffering silently pleases god and gets them closer to him. Others pretend that way, preach that way but do not practice that way. Do you know the story of the Protestant Dean who after preaching on the emptiness of this world and on the divine bliss that is awaiting them in heaven went to consult his doctor who was amidst the congregation? The doctor told him that his disease was such that if he did not take any treatment he would be in heaven in six months but if he followed the doctor's advice he might have to deny himself that eternal bliss for some years and only live in this vale of tears. Eagerly the Dean said "Take me under your care doctor and do your best" This is quite a common story and one that beats you. It is unthinkable that there are persons that prefer a few years amidst the persons they love and surroundings they appreciate even though these pleasant moments be sandwiched between thick layers of suffering, to eternal bliss on the lap of a god with beautiful houris surrounding them. When they behave that way, one cannot help muttering, do these people really believe?

Though the religious men of the early centuries believed in the value of suffering still they did a lot to relieve

the sick and suffering. Many a religious order has worked for this object and the priests and nuns have done wonderful work. But the motive behind it all has not been always sympathy with the body and spirit of the man who suffered. It was more to please god who would be happy to see these devotees walking through filth and disease braving death for his sake. This work would bring them reward in the next and incidentally do good to their fellowmen.

It is just here that our attitude to suffering has changed. We do not care what god thinks of us,—whether he is pleased or angry. We are concerned with the person who suffers. We want to relieve his agony, physical and mental. We do not want to dupe him with the promise of a reward in the next. We make him as comfortable as possible. The needs of his physical body are primarily attended to by medicines and other requisites. The mind is assuaged by a kindly atmosphere and an attitude of help. That portion that cannot be relieved he is asked to bear up because there is no other alternative.

Our attitude to the criminal, to the lunatic, to the unmarried woman with child, to the illegitimate child, has all changed. This is because we have realised to a large extent that many of these are the victims of circumstances and all are not equal in their powers of defence. The habitual criminal is to-day psychoanalysed. The lunatic is no more considered to be possessed by the devil and sent to be exorcised; he is looked after in an asylum. The woman who has made a mistake is helped not to let that mistake blight her life. Likewise has our attitude to disease and death changed considerably. We do not go in a procession round the city or wail before the sun if the rains do not come in time; we now store water and when we expect a shortage, ration our supply wisely. When there is an epidemic we do not distribute relics—we inoculate ourselves with protective measures. We prefer to die peacefully at home rather than on the way to the Holy City. And if the malady is an incurable one and associated with unrelievable suffering we are seriously

thinking whether we should not suggest a way out of that suffering.

This change of attitude is due to our scientific understanding of many of those problems that were considered to be supernatural. With a growth of this knowledge there has also grown up a realisation that much can be done by human agency. We now feel that we are morally bound to relieve suffering and not to offer the counsel that suffering is sent from heaven and must therefore be welcomed. We have progressed morally in this irreligious age. There was plenty of religion in the middle ages and before it; still there was not much of social service. Our modern scientific outlook has made us realise that everyone has a right to live and all the knowledge we have acquired must be pooled to benefit every single member of society. In fact the aim of science is to make our stay here as long and as comfortable as possible. Religion has sanctified suffering for its own ends and has created in the next world a Bank of suffering. The rational scientist does not worry about his account in that Bank. In fact his one aim is to liquidate that Bank.

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NOTES AND NEWS

By Abraham Solomon

The Annual General Meeting of the Rationalist Association of India will be held on Sunday, February 19, at 7-30 p.m. at the Cricket Club of India, "Princes' Pavilion", Churchgate Reclamation, Fort, Bombay.

A notice regarding the Annual Dinner appears on the last page of this issue. From the number of persons who have already bought tickets and others who have expressed their desire to attend, we may well expect the function to be a success. In fact, we shall not be far wrong if we say that it will be one of the best we have had for a long time.

One thing that most of our members grumble at is that there is no opportunity for rationalists to come into contact with one another. Well, here is

a fine opportunity and we hope all our friends will make it a point to attend.

Besides at all our functions, the ceremonious formalities which mar such occasions are happily absent. No subject is "taboo". Conversation is consequently free and is marked by a tendency to healthy controversy.

The management of the C.C.I. have assured us of an excellent "menu" and we have good reasons for believing it. And we expect some good speeches. We cannot at the moment say what other things there will be, but co-secretary David is quietly but extremely busy.

Non-members wishing to attend the function should get in touch with Mr. Milton David. Those who have not yet informed us of their intention to attend should do so immediately, which will facilitate the making of necessary arrangements.

We draw special attention to the announcement on the last page of this issue regarding the Special Offer. Rationalists who have not yet joined the R.A.I. will do well to take the opportunity, and at the same time strengthen the Association.

We hope members will also make efforts to get new members. Increasing the circulation of "Reason" and the number of members for the R.A.I. are the best ways of strengthening the cause. Now that "Reason" is published twice a month we expect it will make the Rationalist movement in this country more active.

It appears that Napoleon, with all his military genius after all made the serious mistake of not being the eleventh child. He should have known better. It might have helped Hitler, Mussolini & Co., in their campaign for more cannon-fodder, been a hope to those waiting for a would-be Napoleon and a consolation to some of our ministers.

We are pleased to note that members have already started sending in re-

newals of subscription to the R.A.I. It saves V.P.P. charges and much trouble. We hope other will follow suit

We gratefully acknowledge the following:—

Dr. R. K. Javeri, Calcutta Rs. 5|-; R. D. K. Rs. 5|-; J. S. Warden, Bombay, Rs. 5|-; Sam. S. Naksautkhan, Surat, Rs. 1|8; Iqubalkhan, Poona, Rs. 1|8.

CORRESPONDENCE

NAPOLEON

To,

The Editor, 'Reason'.

Dear Sir,

In the course of your article appearing in your issue of January 15, 1939 under the heading of "Reason and Politics" the following statement appears "It happens that Napoleon was only the second child (not fourth as Dr. Erulkar said by mistake in the recent protest meeting),....." May I refer you to "The true visage of Napoleon" by Edouard Driault, English translation by W. Savage; wherein it is stated on page 12 that Napoleon was the fourth child. "Twelve children in nineteen years of wedlock without counting miscarriages, six boys, six girls, eight of whom grew up; a son born 1765, a daughter 1767, Joseph 1768, Napoleon 1769, a daughter in 1771, Elisa in 1779, Lucien in 1775, a daughter in 1777, Louis in 1778, Pauline in 1780, Caroline in 1782, Jerome in 1784 and the father died in 1785."

It appears that the first two children died early.

Yours truly,

(Miss) LILLA ERULKAR.

(We are very glad indeed to see that our articles are so carefully scrutinized. We are obliged to accept the correction, though our statement was made on the authority of the "Petit Larousse Illustre", which is a standard work of reference. The discrepancy can no doubt be reconciled by considering that the first two children died very early. This hardly affects the argument involved. Editor.)

"JEW-BAITING."

The harassing of Jews in Germany is an old German practice. Jew-Baiting is an everyday observation in Germany and at present in Italy—the same old story of the lamb and the wolf.

How appalling is the ignoble and militarist plot which sent an entirely innocent Jew to a life-long imprisonment to Devil's Island! It was not the Jews but the heroic Zola supported by some non-Israelite Frenchmen, who roused the conscience of the world towards the injustices wrought by the French militarists against the innocent man in Devil's Island.

The question before the world is "Have not the Jews a place to live under the sun?"

IQUBALKHAN.

PREPOSTEROUS CLAIMS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME

"CELT"

Prof. A. Soares delivered his presidential address before the All India Catholic Association at Mangalore, recently, in which he made such preposterous claims that it promptly caused one of our members to refute him most vehemently in the "Bombay Sentinel". He was supported by the following article.

There is no doubt that the semi-educated Catholics of this country depend on the crass ignorance of their co-religionists to say anything they like without the slightest fear of contradiction.

Many of our readers will, we think guess the identity of "Celt". He is a prolific writer with a caustic pen and formerly a contributor to "Reason."—Asstt. Ed.

The Article by "Pericles" on the "preposterous claims of the Church of Rome", is full of sound sense. I feel sure that the majority of your readers were astonished to read all the extravagant claims put forward by Mr. A. Soares, before the All India Catholic Congress recently. It now seems true that our Jesuit friends have received "instructions" from the Vatican, to concentrate upon India, with a view to the conversion of the "Indian Masses" to Christianity, by which is meant the wholesale conversion of Indians to "Romanism."

This, I understand is considered urgent by the Holy Office, for, thanks to the drive of Nazism and Fascism in Europe and South America, the Church is fast losing ground in the West. Hence, all this sudden brotherly feeling and sympathy on the part of Romanism, towards the "pagans" of India, and towards the "Heathen Chinese."

It is all the same old game, practised by the Church for many centuries. The Church is reactionary and opposed to all progress, material as well as spiritual, when it suits her. For example in England, France and the U.S.A., she is at present "democratic." In South America she is Fascist. In Italy she is Fascist as well as in Spain.

Sinking Into Barbarism

In Germany and Austria she was "Nazi", until the Catholic son of the Church, Herr Hitler, intoxicated with power and hard pressed for funds, decided on a process of wholesale confiscation of Church property. Directly that happened, the Church assumed the role of an innocent and injured party.

She now "curses" Hitler and "warns" Mussolini. Her "heart bleeds," for the poor Jews, all that is because a large number of Jewish Refugees, as Cardinal Hinsley pointed out the other day are 'Roman Catholics.' Therefore the Church became anti-Nazi.

We all condemn this twentieth Century exhibition of barbarism, and it is clear that "the Western nations are sinking into the barbarism of the dark ages" as the Archbishop of Canterbury rightly told us in a recent broadcast.

It is interesting to note how remarkably this "new barbarism" in the West, resembles the old abomination of the Dark ages. At the period known as the "Dark ages", Europe did sink into dark barbarism, while in "Heathen East" in the so-called "land of barbarians", indeed throughout the whole East there was enjoyed at that period a very high degree of civilization.

What Priests Have Done

The period known as the Dark Ages lasted roughly a thousand years; and during that time the Roman Church was powerful in the whole of Western Europe. And precisely the same methods

were restored to by the officers of the Church in those days, as we see in Germany and Italy to-day. Suppression of thought and speech, suppression of all forms of liberty. Your life was safe for exactly so long as you were a true son and idolator of the Church, and all her awful creeds and dogmas.

I would seriously ask Mr. Soares, who I believe is an educated man (he is I think, a "Professor") — I would ask him; did all the priests of Rome increase the mental wealth of man as much say as Bruno, Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, and thousands of others? Did all the ignorant priests of France and Britain do as great work as Bacon, Shakespeare or Diderot, or Voltaire? Have all the priests in England, France, Germany and Italy done as much for freedom of thought and speech and progress as say, David Hume, or Thomas Paine?

What would the world be if so-called "infidels" had never been? We must ask ourselves very seriously—why should it be taken for granted that the great men with a consuming passion for human liberty, the men who devoted their lives to the liberation of their fellow men, should have been hissed at in the hour of death, into purgatory and hell, when men who defended slavery, practised all forms of vice, burned thousands at the stake, justified the stealing of babes from the breast of mothers, and lashed the naked back of unpaid labour, are supposed to have passed smilingly from Earth to the embraces of the Angels and are now enjoy everlasting life in Paradise. That is the teaching of Romanism to-day: that has been its teaching throughout the ages.

Pious Children of Church

This is what the Church has taught for nearly 2,000 years, down to the present day. I would ask further: how are we to explain the phenomenon that we notice in India? Here for thousands of years, the scientists, the philosophers, even Reformers, both Social and Spiritual, have 'never tortured' and persecuted, and killed. These have all been welcomed and protected within "heathen" India's hospitable shores.

What are we to think of the instigators of such atrocities as the Bartholo-

mew massacres? the religious and pious inventors and users of thumb screws? of iron boots? and racks, the burners and tearers of human flesh, the stealers, the whippers and the enslavers of men? what are we to think of these pious children of the Church who did all these dreadful things "For the sake of the Church of Christ"?

It would be an evil day for India if she were to embrace the "Christianity" of the Church of Rome, for as your contributor "Pericles" rightly points out, both the Absolute Church and the Totalitarian States have one thing in common — they are both enemies of Freedom in all its forms. Their methods are cruel beyond words. The Absolute Church at the moment is helpless for such evils, for she has not the power to commit them as she did in the past.

A Challenge

..Mr. Soares cannot re-write what is contained in the pages of history. I challenge him to mention one instance where the Church has supported a single measure of Parliamentary or any other measure of Social Reform either in Britain or France or America for 500 years.

On the contrary she has been the deadliest enemy of Democracy and of all democratic measures, aimed at the emancipation of the poor and of the oppressed. If she were to have the power she would play similar havoc here in India as she has played in the West,— "Crush the Infamous" (Voltaire).

ACID DROPS

After the Secretary of State (for the Interior) (U.S.A.) had declared that the conduct of the German Gangsters could only be compared with the "darkest period of superstition and savagery," the German Ambassador had the impudence to present a protest by Goering, Hitler and his fellow gangsters to the American Government. The acting Secretary of State sharply refused to accept the protest, and used some pretty straight language on so doing. Now Senator Pittman, who holds the important position of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has followed up what has

been said by the following explicit statement:—

The people of the United States do not like the Government of Japan.

The people of the United States do not like the Government of Germany.

The people of the United States, in my opinion, are opposed to any form of dictatorial Government—Fascist or Communist.

The people of the United States, have the right and power to enforce morality and justice in accordance with peace treaties with us—and they will.

Our Government does not have to use military force, and will not, unless necessary.

This is plain, straightforward language and behaviour, and it is sadly needed in a situation when our own official representatives appear to find it distasteful to express a straight and unmistakable language, either to the nation they represent or to the mob of racketeers with whom they are in communication.

The statements of the men cited are said to have the full approval of President Roosevelt, and we can well believe it. These men are realizing that one must meet a bully with firmness and a coward with courage. Had this been realized in this country earlier "Munich" would never have fallen to the level of message-carrier for Hitler, and the men who are responsible for the unspeakable crimes of the past three months would have hesitated in their course. As it is they have secured more in a few months than they could ever have dreamed of getting in their lifetime, and have placed upon the rest of Europe a burden that threatens to grow greater with the passing of time, and which will result either in Europe becoming a collection of slave states or a single slave state under the worst despotism the world has ever known.

Streicher, one of Hitler's friends, and in whose hands lie very largely the direction of the persecution of the Jews, has discovered a reason for turning Jewish children out to freeze to death or die of starvation. This is that the Jews

killed Jesus. A more immediate justification might be found in the fact that it was benevolent Jews who brought up Goebbels and paid for his education.

Anyway, truth is always stranger than fiction, and Streicher's reason for Jew-baiting, reminds one of the story of the drunken British sailor who, so impressed with the story just told to him of the sufferings of Jesus, violently assaulted the first Jew he met. "What is that for?" asked the Jew. "Your people killed Christ," replied the sailor. "But that was two thousand years ago." "Doesn't matter," came the retort, "I've only just heard about it." It takes some time for fact to catch up with fiction, but it usually does so.

Meanwhile we may note another point. We see that questions have been asked in Parliament concerning German methods of carrying on propaganda, imposing Nazi methods and control on Germans resident here, and also the building of Nazi institutions in London. What we suggest is that our Government will permit these Nazi institutions in this country only on condition that similar institutions are permitted in Germany for the teaching of British democratic principles. No reasonable objection could be taken to this, and it is time the Gangsters gave as well as took.

Just as a reminder of the quality of the "peace" brought us as a consequence of the Munich pact, the severe weather here and on the Continent has meant the freezing to death of many of the children who have been turned out of Germany, with their parents, and who are wandering without adequate food or clothing in the No Man's Land between Germany and Poland. The old people have perished in a similar manner, but we do not stress their demise. We hope that this kind of occurrence will not interfere with Lord Londonderry's affection for his friend Goering the gangster or for the demi-God, Hitler.

One other item is cited only to further our sense of peace. On December 21 the daily papers contained an account of the execution of Peter Foster, who escaped some time ago from one of the worst of the German concentration

camps. Foster was charged with killing one of the guards of the camp in the course of his escape. Forster escaped into Czechoslovakia before the Munich peace. The German Government applied for his extradition, but the Government of Czecho declined to give him up as he was a political prisoner. Now that Czecho is for all purposes part of the Reich, the new Government was forced to surrender Forster who was executed within twenty-four hours of recapture.

—Reproduced from the Freethinker
January 8, 1939

A CORRECTION

We regret that in the January 1st issue of "Reason" in the "Appeal for the best of Causes," the name of Mr. D. J. N. Lee who donated Rs. 10/- was omitted through oversight.

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Anna I.

INTELLIGENCE AND MYSTICISM

By

R. D. KARVE

Why is it that even people who have proved their intellectual capacity often show mystical tendencies? To a certain extent, it would be correct to say that it is an intellectual defect in a man not to be prepared to use his intelligence or his reasoning power in any given case, or to set aside some subjects as not subject to reasoning. This is of course an arbitrary division and it is very often due to impressions received during childhood, before one learns to reason, at an age when it seems perfectly natural to accept anything that is given out as truth by parents or other adults who are assumed to be infallible. It requires a much greater force of intellect to break through the prejudices thus implanted during childhood, and this is not only beyond the power of ordinary persons, but even some so-called intellectuals. An intellectual person usually understands however that some kind of justification has to be given for these pet beliefs acquired in childhood. And this leads to a most ridiculous exhibition of special pleading.

The ascetic tendencies which are so often seen in otherwise perfectly reasonable persons seem to be due to the idea that suffering in this world is a passport to Heaven, which is found in many religions if not all. These are found even in irreligious people who cannot give any explanation for them even if they try. Naturally these

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tendencies are very common among religious persons. Blaise Pascal, whose intellectual capacity can hardly be doubted, wore an iron belt which had points intended to prick him directly on the skin. And whenever he had any thought prompted by vanity, or found that he was getting too much pleasure out of any situation, he used to press it in with his elbows to increase the pain. He kept this habit till his death. He is reported to have said, "Humiliate yourself, impotent reason; shut up, imbecile nature!" He was a victim of the education he had received. Fight as he would he had to submit. The same was the case with Racine, the famous French poet and dramatist who had the same masters. He tried to live like other people, but the religious imprint in him was ineradicable.

It is the mysticism of intellectuals that led to the formation of the more modern sects of Hinduism, like the Arya Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, which last does not call itself Hindu at all. They were founded by people who found it difficult to believe in current superstitions, but could not get rid of belief in God altogether. So they abolished all minor gods and postulated one God of the usual omniscient, benevolent type. They thought it necessary to pray to him and that they could become one with him by meditation.

Some philosophers in the 18th century conceived a "natural religion", depending on human nature. According to Diderot, natural religion is a fight against all the errors taught to us during childhood and all the prejudices of which we are victims. It is a condemnation of asceticism and traditionalism, a sort of religion based on the 'pure light of reason.'

Another theory leaves reason aside and wants to appeal to the heart alone. That is the mysticism of Pascal. He despises reason as well as custom, which, he says, can only be auxiliary, and selects intuition as a guide towards the ideal. He says that proofs of a metaphysical God are so far removed from human reason that they produce little impression, and even if they did, it would only be at the moment, but an hour after-

wards, people begin to doubt again. The real defence of religion is to make God felt by the heart. And this line of thought has inspired a cult which says that there is an innate need of god within us, a call to infinity.

Mr. Bergson affirmed that all the proofs of the existence of God are no doubt unconvincing when studied and judged separately, but when taken together, they constitute an irrefutable intuition and he even asserted that there was really no atheist, that the only absolute atheist would be some one who aspired to nothing!

A woman in a hospital was thoroughly convinced that she gave birth to Jesus Christ in Xmas. She would listen to no argument, nor a suggestion that Jesus was born somewhat earlier. Some people pray to god to grant certain desires, but others ask for nothing but communion with god and resort to certain practices to ensure such communion and really believe that the semi-conscious state which they thus induce gives them that communion. In various negro tribes, people dance to a monotonous rhythm during hours together or even days, after which they become nearly senseless and this state, according to them, is an approach to God. Persian dervishes are said to turn round with their arms spread out to keep their balance till they fall completely unconscious and suppose that they are then identified with God. To facilitate this practice, they group together and get some musicians to play during this performance. Anatole France gives the description of a monk, perhaps imaginary, who resolved to live on the top of a pillar with a seat on the top, which was not large enough for him to sleep at full length, so that he had to cross his legs and let his head fall on his chest in order to sleep. Sleep was thus a greater torture to him than waking. Being nearer the sky than common mortals, he thought himself nearer to God and found communion easier! This does not show any great intellectual level, but it seems necessary to remind intellectual mystics that mystical tendencies always imply a defect of intellect.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE POOR

By LUIGO.

I have always thought that calling religion "the opium of the masses" was too mild to be true. Those who know the operations of opium know that it benumbs, brings on a deadening unconsciousness. Now, can any man feel happy in the belief or conviction that religion merely does this? . . . Is it not more like a siren that bewitches? Does religion not tempt the masses with extravagant promises into overlooking their own human rights and privileges and suffering untold, unnecessary and selfishly-imposed privations and humiliations? . . . Religion makes the masses both conscious and unconscious, which opium does not quite do; it makes them so very conscious, of the next world, that their unconsciousness to the present is the obvious result.

Having explained why I have never been happy about *terming religion merely "the opium of the masses"*, I will now try to resolve whether religion is consciously responsible for the abjectness and misery of the poor and destitute. After revolving over this very important point for years and drawing practical instances from history for illumination and elucidation, I am convinced like many others, who have given this subject overdue attention and thought, that religion is consciously responsible for the crying afflictions of the poor. Take Christianity as a case in instance. Does anybody personally believe that Christianity has not been actively and deliberately responsible for the serfdom or the destitution of the people? If he does, he is not at all alive to the great things that are happening to-day and augur so well for the world. Christianity is at a terrible disadvantage everywhere and is making vain efforts to survive. And why? . . . That is the question upon which the fulcrum rests. Why is Christianity having the struggle of its life? Why is Christianity turning desperate at the attitude of the whole world towards it, in spite of its scornful boast that it rests for ever on the firm and unstormable rock of Peter? It was a happy instance for the Churches that the poor remained deceived so long;

it was a cause to rejoice and get intoxicated and feast over. But nothing that is evil can endure. Some days the crater must erupt and bring sudden and fast ruin to the dwellings of shame and mischief. And so the poor did erupt—they erupted with the concentrated force of the ages. They realised that Christianity, as it was, was *entirely an exploitation*; it merely helped the rich to remain rich or turn richer and kept the poor, with its doctrine, destitute and away from their rights. Russia is one glaring instance, among so many others, where the poor happily revolted against the Churches and so against the rich, whom the Churches supported. The Clergy were fast friends of an autocratic and cruel Kingship and nobility. They made merry and drank wine and ate caviar with the rich and powerful and forgot the poor. How could the clergy or the churches then but be against the poor and make use of Christ's "sermon on the mount" for their own ends and of those with whom they identified their interests?

"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a

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rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven". "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". Christ spoke this from his very heart, just as any great prophet or any great man might have done. Christ in saying this obviously meant to warn the rich man from his riches; from his amassing so much and so graspingly that he overlooked the genuine rights and privileges of his brethren. And yet, has anyone at any time heard any Padre or religious Potentate fervently interpret Christ's sayings in this manner from the pulpit? As a man who has heard and seen, I devoutly avouch, in the name of everything good and holy in the world, that it has hardly ever been done.

Everyone knows the plight of the poor and that it is a direct result of capitalism—which Christ denounced when he warned the rich man—and yet where has ever any religious propaganda been carried on against Capitalism? Sunday after Sunday, sermon after sermon is being preached; periodicals after periodicals speak on subject after subject—but has any drive been made against the rich or capitalism either from the pulpit or on paper? Sermons out of number dilate on eternal hellfires and everlasting happiness as though this was Christianity's only concern and as if the churches were not bound to interest themselves in the poor or, conversely, as if it was holy and right to be linked with the rich. After all, and those who see it know it, it is the rich who provide the Churches with riches; it is the powerful who provide the Churches with power. If the Churches defended the weak and destitute against the rich and powerful, they would be fighting against themselves, they would lose both their riches and their power. If Christianity was the supporter of the people, it would have openly proved it all along by fearlessly carrying on an intensive drive both by mouth and pen against the rich.

This the poor have happily realised and they are therefore fast turning their forces against her—they have been wounded with the bitter thought of their exploitation. All over the world there

is a rising against Christianity (Catholicism much more than all) and, besides strong reasons for its failure scientifically and intellectually like any other religion, there is the ever growing realisation that it must be crushed sooner than ever and so prevented from exploiting the Masses.

THE PARSI'S LOT

By Jal. B. Bharucha

The Parsi has often been held up as the most perfect example of man's subservience to superstition and unfathomed fear and not without good reason. The Parsis may rightly claim to be the most advanced and intellectual community in this country; yet it is often wondered how little education and learning has done to shake off the yoke of a priest-ridden and meaningless religion.

In fact, the truth seems to point out that as education increased so also did the obsessions of my community.

We are born because of certain unknown and favourable factors. From the time of our birth other factors enter the stage: the stars, the moon, our previous existence, our father's horoscope and mother's kismet, and also just plain luck. These, and not individual merit, make all the difference between happiness, health and prosperity on the one hand and misery, illness and poverty on the other. If a Parsi succeeds he is lucky and his stars are good; if he does not well it is just his stars!

It is this blank all-embracing uncertainty that makes us Parsis the best clients of astrologers, charlatans, yogis, charm-sellers, black-magicians, quacks and crystal gazers. Our slavish mentality and obsession to fear makes us devotees not only of the Fire Temple at Udwarda, but every possible Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian shrine where rumour says that miracles are being performed. My wife often tells me how she consulted at least half a dozen astrologers and other domestic experts before she dared marry me!

And so, we Parsis begin our day by praying to the Sun, and end it by blessing good old Sol for shining and giving warmth all day. At all times **Kusti-dust-**

ing is the rule. Praying to the sea is another beneficial pastime and last and not the least let us not forget the supernatural properties of the Holy Well in Churchgate Street.

Our prayers as everybody knows, are not understood at all. They are just formulas as my mother explains that must be muttered faithfully because "by long usage they have acquired great supernatural power" Like the Buddhist "Om mane padme hum!"

This peculiar mentality of the Parsi community has made the Parsis leaders of every possible religious movement which does not require that they should proselytise. We find that the Parsis are the leaders of the Theosophical Society, Bahai-ism, and what not; and may also mention our H'ble Brothers the Worshipful Members of the Masonic Lodges.

Nevertheless, if all Parsis start from the unknown, they come to a most definite end in the most gruesome manner at the Tower of Silence.

And I have been asked by several of my Parsi Brothers that if we start from thin air, why should we not have a Crematorium and end in smoke?

Jal. B. Bharucha.

SCIENCE AND THE INFINITE

By M. V. V. K. Rangachari

(Continued from page 49)

The rigidity of mathematical quantities has thus far enabled us to deal in absolutes. Either at *infinity*, or at *Zero*, or again in the other side of the scale, the minus side, gliding down to minus infinity, we are unconsciously deceived into handling abstractions, incomprehensible in their very nature in any ideal absolute sense. We forget in mathematical manipulations that we may only handle with some intelligence more objective approximations to these national concepts, but never the concepts themselves in any walk of life, philosophy included. We utter the syllables one, two, three, etc., with a facility which has deceived us into ignoring their content. When we speak of three mangoes on the table, we have, within us, framed the standard for the unit of the fruit, and judge that the objects lying on the

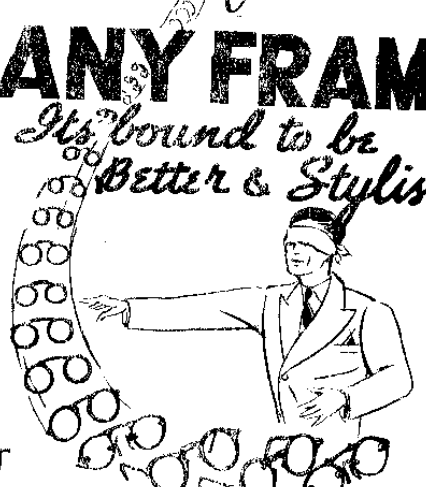
table approximate that unit-standard. In our measurements of time and space, the notion of approximation is patent. Two inches can on no measuring rod be standardised beyond certain limits of approximation. No clock or chronometer can divide time with precision beyond a certain degree of approximation. Yet in the affairs of life we count fruits, large and small, by hundreds and their multiples, ignoring the difference in the degrees of their approximation to the unconscious standard unit in the background. Indeed, our unit-judge leaps to the forefront when we are offered a slice in place of a fruit, as much as when we grudge accepting all small fruits at the price we have agreed to for a larger sample. Thus we ignore a small deficit in the length of the cloth purchased, provided it does not affect the fit of the suit. And we do not frown at the servant who delayed our lunch by .000000001 second, which we have ordinarily no means of detecting. But the degree of relative approx-

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ximation is there, and the time lost in the delay is much bigger than Planck's constant whose value is put as .000000,000000,000000000000,006555 seconds ergs, with the proportionately huge loss of work. We excuse the delaying servant because we are not judging his work from the dial of the ergometer. But a delay of five minutes that meant the missing of an engagement, or of a train, would surely raise a frown, just as the colossal delay of .000000001 second in the physicist's laboratory may mean the failure of an entire experiment, devised perhaps in several years of patient manipulation and study. If in actual life we are able to get on by ignoring slight variations in the degree of approximation, mathematics is a thorough opiate that eliminates the sense of approximation altogether from our calculations. We forget, when we are talking of two inches, that we are speaking of approximate length, and while standing for two seconds we have no means of ascertaining whether we stood longer, beyond what the crude hand of the watch shows. We seem to have lost all sense of relativity, and pounce upon our concepts of the divisions of time and space as if they had all along been absolutes. The need to remember that absolute quantities are beyond our reach, and that we should go content with the greater or less degree of approximations is brought home to us in our questionings of nature. In the physical sciences, dealing with things great and small from atomic physics to astronomy, every minute experiment and every close observation points to the possibility of the margin of error, and the need for the improvement of the method or the refinement of the apparatus to gain a higher degree of approximation to truth. Thus in experimental science for the first time the idea dawns on us that the absolute zero is an unapproachable figure.

Truth, such truth as may be comprehended by us, will always remain relative; the absolute is an objective engendered by the projection of our own thought; and the nearer we seem to be coming to it, the more distant, like our own shadow, it flies.

The hymn of the **Rigveda**, the most ancient portion of the Vedas, declares: "The Gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being." (Book X, Hymn CXXIX, 6). The poetic height is enhanced by the doubt expressed thus: "He, the first origin of the creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it, Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he does not." (Book X, Hymn CXXIX, 7). These hymns sufficiently emphasise the futility of seeking to enter into the primal origins of life and being. Yet there are indications of a material explanation of the universe so early as in the **Rigveda** itself. "That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature, apart from it was nothing whatsoever." (Ibid, 2); this reminds us of the Substance conceived by Spinoza to bridge the gulf between mind and matter in the dualistic philosophy of Descartes, especially as we are told that this primordial substance is neither Sat, nor Asat (existence nor non-existence). This suggestion gains strength from the fact that the succeeding verse (3) makes Warmth (**tapasah**) responsible for the Unit." All that existed then was void, and formless: by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit." If that Unit that was then born was the **Sat** (the existent) as we have every reason to deduce that it was, we see the non-mental beginnings of the First Mind. The next verse makes it yet plainer. "Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of spirit. (Desire is Kama). Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship with the non-existent" (Ibid, 4). If we take the Unit to mean the existent (**Sat**) then the reference to sages discovering the kinship with the non-existent (**Asat**) must mean that both were begotten out of the primordial substance when the Unit was born by Warmth, i.e. by a process of their separation as when water is analysed into Hydrogen and Oxygen; or, if that primordial substance was itself identified with **Asat** (non-existence) as the **Taittiriyaopanishad** (**Anan-**

(Continued on page 65)

REASON

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Editor :

Prof. R. D. Karve, M. A.

Diplome d'Etudes Superieures (Paris).

Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

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NOTES AND NEWS

by Abraham Solomon

There is just time to remind members of the Annual Dinner on Sunday next (Feb. 19). We hope by the time this issue is out all those able to attend have informed the Secretaries accordingly giving the number of guests they wish to bring along with them. The smooth running of the function depends on our knowing the number of persons attending so that necessary arrangements can be made.

Friends should please note that the Annual meeting and Dinner will be held in the "**Governor's Pavilion**" The change was necessary as it was found that the accommodation available in the "Princes' Pavilion" will not be sufficient.

We are interested in certain articles which have appeared in the "Bombay

Sentinel" and the "Sunday Chronicle" by "A Black Catholic." Evidently a person above the ordinary in that creed, he has exposed the colour prejudice which exists in Roman Catholic Schools and Colleges, particularly the Convents. Incidentally he strongly deplores the submissive and cringing attitude of his co-religionists towards white priests and nuns. He complains that these priests and nuns hypnotise their followers with senseless devotions and prayers to saints, at the same time terrifying them with the horrors of Hell. He admits that there is a good deal of bigotry and fanaticism among his co-religionists in this community. Is this not a sad picture of those who claim to preach "the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God"?

We are indeed very pleased to learn that our learned contributor Mr. M. V. V. K. Rangachari, was the president of the "Ethics and Social Philosophy" section at the 14th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress held at Allahabad in December last. It is encouraging that the Rationalist movement in India has had an opportunity to express itself in that academic body composed mostly of professors of Philosophy of all the Indian Universities. Mr. Rangachari is a lawyer of Cocanada, South India and a tireless worker in the service of the "best of causes." He is the Hon. Local Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association of London, for the Madras Presidency.

Some French genealogists, it is reported, have revealed that Mussolini is descended from a Jewish family. What the deuce is the Duce going to say to this? "Elementary, my dear Watson!" The reply will no doubt be an application of that brilliant theory propounded by his Big Brother across the border, to the effect that Nordic souls may sometimes inhabit non-Nordic bodies.

The next issue of "Reason" will be sent by V.P.P. to those who have not yet sent in their renewals of subscription to the R.A.I. We hope members will be good enough to honour the V.P.P.

D. R. D. Wadia,
Hon. Treasurer, R.A.I.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMAN AND A RATIONALIST

R. C. Woman:—It is the united prayers of our family that one day you will come back to the faith of your fathers.

A Rationalist:—Why? What would be the advantage to come back to the creed I have definitely discarded?

R.C.W.:—Because it is the only true religion and one cannot hope for salvation unless one professes it.

R.:—Do you seriously believe that R. Catholicism is the only true religion on earth?

R.C.W.:—Yes I do. We are moreover taught that all other religions are false.

R.:—This is a serious error under which you labour. As a matter of fact, every believer in any other creed also believes that his or her religion is the only true one and all others are false.

R.C.W.:—But it can be proved that such claims must be due to downright ignorance and they cannot for a moment be sustained.

R.:—Roman Catholicism is also in the same boat.

R.C.W.:—Holy Writ distinctly says that unless one believes in R.C., one cannot be saved.

R.:—So also say the Scriptures of all other religions.

R.C.W.:—These other religions were founded by men, but Catholicism is the only religion which God, Himself, founded, so there is a vast difference here.

R.:—You maintain your claim very boldly, probably because you do not know any better. I mean no offence, but it is clear you are ignorant of the claims of other religions.

R.C.W.:—It is true that I have not studied the claims of other religions, but I am not aware that God, who became incarnated in Jesus came down to establish any other religion but Roman Catholicism.

R.:—Why not say Christianity? If Christianity is true, then Science must be wrong. Well, I am seriously convinced that Science is true and Christianity is founded on erroneous doctrines and therefore it is wrong and cannot be true.

R.C.W.:—This is where you people who dabble in science make the most serious mistake. You forget that science is only concerned with material things while Christianity teaches us things spiritual and puts us into communion with God through His only son Jesus Christ.

R.:—So then according to you, science has nothing to say about the origin of Christianity and whether it is founded on a sound dogma or not?

R.C.W.:—Quite so. It is not the province of science to meddle in such things.

R.:—May I ask you who has taught you such ideas?

R.C.W.:—Our spiritual teachers, of course.

R.:—Well, you can tell them that, unless they themselves are seriously deceived, they have been teaching you that which is not correct.

R.C.W.:—I should like to know on what grounds you can say such a thing.

R.:—Because to begin with science has a lot to say about the most important dogma of Christianity, namely, the so-called Redemption of Mankind which is concerned with the very origin of Man.

R.C.W.:—I am afraid I cannot clearly understand what you mean.

R.:—I mean that science positively teaches us that the origin of man as depicted in the Bible is not true and therefore the dogma of the Redemption which is based on that cannot also be true.

R.C.W.:—Oh, is that it? You are perhaps not aware that the Church does not insist that the Biblical History of Creation is literally true.

R.:—Well, if it is not true, how can such a stupendous dogma be built on it? If it is not literally true then the Fall of Man cannot also be literally true.

R.C.W.:—Do you mean that the story of the Fall in the Garden of Eden is not true?

R.:—It cannot be true since Man did not begin his existence as the Bible teaches and the Story of Eden is clearly a Myth.

R.C.W.:—How then did he come into existence?

R.:—To understand this properly you must carefully study the science call Biology. There you will find that the origin of man is not as the Bible teaches. He was not created as a full-grown man some thousand years ago.

R.C.W.:—How was he created?

R.:—He comes from a long line of ancestors low down the scale of life until ultimately it is from the family of the Primates that he is descended.

R.C.W.:—I do not understand what all this means.

R.:—It means that man is derived from the lower animals and that his nearest relatives are the members of the Primates, namely, the Anthropoid Apes.

R.C.W.:—Oh, the Darwin Theory.

R.:—Of which you doubtless know not a word.

R.C.W.:—I have heard it said that even if Man is derived from the lower animals, God did infuse a soul into him to distinguish him from the brute creatures.

R.:—Though your creed does not teach this, as it still insists on the truth of the story of the Garden of Eden, I am afraid that it is a way of preparing the path in case your Church must one day abandon the myth of Eden. The trouble is at what stage of his development did God infuse a soul into man?

R.C.W.:—He must have done so, since Man is the only rational creature in existence.

R.:—Here again a little study of science will convince you of the absurdity of such a proposition.

R.C.W.:—I now see what you mean. If man was not created as the Bible teaches the story of Redemption and Atonement is all an error.

R.:—Quite so. It proves to be an Oriental myth and a strange belief that an innocent pays for the sins of others. It is, indeed, a repulsive belief and one that no longer appeals to cultured people. It was conceived by semi-barbarous people and will only prevail as long as people are ignorant of the teachings of Science.

(Contd. from page 62)

davalli, II, 7) did identify, the Unit of Sat was born by Warmth from Asat. In other words, the beginnings of mind are rooted in energy acting on matter. But this is not to overlook the difficulty in making the assumption not only that the Unit referred to was mental in nature, but the substance from which it was said to have been born was either matter (Asat) or something which was neither Sat nor Asat, or again which was in the nature of the compound of both.

(to be concluded)

Christianity has ever been the enemy of human love; it has forever cursed and expelled and crucified the one passion which sweetens and smiles on human life, which makes the desert blossom as the rose, and which glorifies the common things and common ways of earth. It made of this, the angel of life, a shape of sin and darkness, and bade the woman whose lips were warm with the first kisses of her lover believe herself accursed and shamed.

Ouida.

Custom is the arch-enemy of understanding.

Chapman Cohen.

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ACID DROPS

German and Italian Fascism is more than a national question to-day, and far more than a political one. It is a movement which not merely aims at converting Italy and Germany into permanent slave States, but with its megalomaniacal glorification of force, with its avowed intention of keeping no promise and honouring no undertaking that it pays to break or ignore, and with its complete denial of the civil rights of men, women and children, has become one of the greatest of historic threats to whatever of civilization it can influence or control. Neither Germany nor Italy now even take the trouble to hide the fact that it means to get what it can by a process of blackmail, and by the time it can no longer make headway by that means, both countries hope to have developed sufficient strength to simply take what it desires. That is the plain fact of the situation, and its discussion is no longer a question of politics, if it ever was such; it is something on which the salvation of a large part of the world depends.

In the circumstances every liberal-minded man and woman will welcome the message which President Roosevelt placed before the United States Congress. During the period which Mr. H. G. Wells aptly described as the time of the "propaganda of terror," which had its significant expression in the Munich Pact, which, in turn, gave Hitler far more than he ever dreamed of getting for some years to come in the shape of plunder; which made Germany the supreme power in Central and Eastern Europe, and encouraged his co-operator in plunder and brutality, Mussolini, to increase his demands, President Roosevelt sent two letters to Hitler in September last. Although in form an urging to peace, we said at the time that these were more than letters, they were ultimatums, a declaration to the world that if Hitler was stupid enough to go to war (it is generally admitted now that it was no more than a piece of bluff) America would join in the fight against world slavery.

Those letters we never took as more than an act intended to prepare the people of the U. S. A. for taking part in the European struggle. Of course, the enormous probability is that Hitler would have climbed down as he has always done in the face of firmness. Or, alternatively, if he had gone

to war, with Russia (which was ready in spite of Lord Winterton's deliberate misrepresentation) France, several of the smaller States of Europe, Czechoslovakia (with its long strategical position) and backed with the help of America, the fall of Nazism would have been assured. From that fate he was saved by Mr. Chamberlain concluding an "agreement" that was dictated by Hitler, and which has made vast numbers of people realize that the choice was not between the Chamberlain policy of surrender and war, but most probably the choice of running a slight risk of war with the greater probability that the aftermath of Munich would have been spared the world. The real choice was between war and something worse than war.

Not the least important announcement of President Roosevelt was that Congress would have to consider the question of an amendment of the United States Constitution. He said, quite truly:—

Our neutrality laws may operate unevenly and unfairly, may actually give aid to an aggressor and deny it to a victim. The instinct of self-preservation should warn us that we ought not to allow that to happen any more.

The American neutrality laws to which the President referred, are of a slightly different character from ours. But in the case of our neutrality we saw the Government of the day, first, with regard to Abyssinia, forsaking our treaty to furnish Abyssinia with arms should they be attacked. And in the case of Spain, our Government rigidly prevented the Spanish Government getting from us, by purchase, the arms it was entitled to get by international law, and stood quietly by while Germany and Italy poured arms and men into Spain in a steady flow, Mr. Chamberlain all the time professing ignorance of a state of affairs that were openly published in the Italian press. And at the time of writing we have Mr. Chamberlain paying an official visit to Mussolini. For what? Is it another Munich? Or is it to make certain of the isolation of Russia, which, if successful with regard to this country, carries with it the possibility of a huge trade agreement between Russia and Germany, and which will be aimed against this country? The only thing we can be certain of concerning "personal contacts," by these secret arrangements with

the Dictators, is a further curtailing of freedom in the democratic States. And that is a question, not of politics, but of human progress.

Those religious folk who are opposed to Nazi brutality and robbery, but who persist in calling Germany "godless" will have had a shock if they read the "Daily Telegraph" for January 5. They will find there the information that Himler, Chief of the German police, and who out-Hitlers Hitler in the brutality of his character, is not merely religious but a Christian, and not merely Christian but a pronounced Oxford Grouper, one of that peculiar lot of pathological exhibits of whom the chief is Dr. Buchman.

Dr. Buchman, too, it must be noted, is an admirer of Hitler, and that brings one to a consideration of the German propaganda that is going on in this country. In this connexion one recalls the indignation caused by Russian propaganda leading to a breach of diplomatic relations in this country. In the case of Germany the propaganda is open and avowed. The instructions given to Germans in England are easily obtainable—even Mr. Chamberlain, who seems ignorant of the most advertised facts concerning Italian and German Fascism, can easily obtain full details. German subjects are held in strict obedience to Hitler while they are in this country, and Hitler holds their parents and families, with their belongings, as guarantee for their obedient behaviour. The contrast between the violent indignation against Bolshevik propaganda here and the almost open welcome given to German propaganda is very striking.

What has happened to Mr. Garvin and the 'Observer'? After giving the Prime Minister unqualified praise, and glorifying Munich, in its last issue Mr. Garvin writes in his weekly "special" that, "the sequel of Munich has been a bitter tale. The ink was hardly dry on the Munich agreements before the Utopian hopes of a moment began to fade and vanish. They were replaced by a worst state of feeling than had existed before. Announcing its intention to maintain a permanent ascendancy of force, the dictatorship for the first time began to threaten the foundations of democracy in its own sphere."

But one should be just, even to Dictators. Hitler had never ceased to preach force, and both Hitler and Garvin proclaim themselves fools if they ever expected anything else to follow than what had happened. And it is quite wrong to call Munich an "agreement." It was, in its most favourable aspect to Mr. Chamberlain a dictation, as surely as was the Versailles Treaty itself. And, in the circumstances, anyone may be excused the suspicion that on Chamberlain's side its only triumph was that it weakened, almost to the point of complete rupture, the Anglo-French-Russian Alliance and the Franco-Russian Alliance. The further triumph of Munich was that it saved Hitler from the loss of prestige if he had given way to any degree, a certain and rapid disaster if he had been foolish enough to go to war.

—Reproduced from the "Freethinker",
Jan. 15, 1938.

REVIEW

THE ATHEISM OF ASTRONOMY, A Refutation of the Theory that the Universe is governed by Intelligence, by Woolsey Teller. The Truth Seeker Company, 38 Park Row, New York. Pp. 121. Cloth \$1.00, paper 50 cents.

The author has proved that it is only superficial observers who find any order or harmony in Nature and who are led to infer the existence of an Intelligence behind that order. The human mind is so constructed that to understand anything, it must attribute some kind of order to it, some kind of interrelations between the different constituents. But anybody who studies astronomy carefully sees at once that there can be no order and no understandable aim in the world considered as a whole. The geocentric theory of the world has long been dead, and it is on this theory that the Genesis of the Bible is based. The Earth cannot be considered as a very important part of the universe and it is contrary to all sense of proportion to imagine that an intelligent God cares about what happens to the 'souls' of the creatures called men living on this tiny bit of the universe, which is itself very insignificant in size when compared with the vastness of the empty spaces. The solar system has been compared to six specks of dust floating about Waterloo Station. These specks represent all that the so-called Creator has been capable of producing in all eternity. The book will well repay perusal.

R. D. K.

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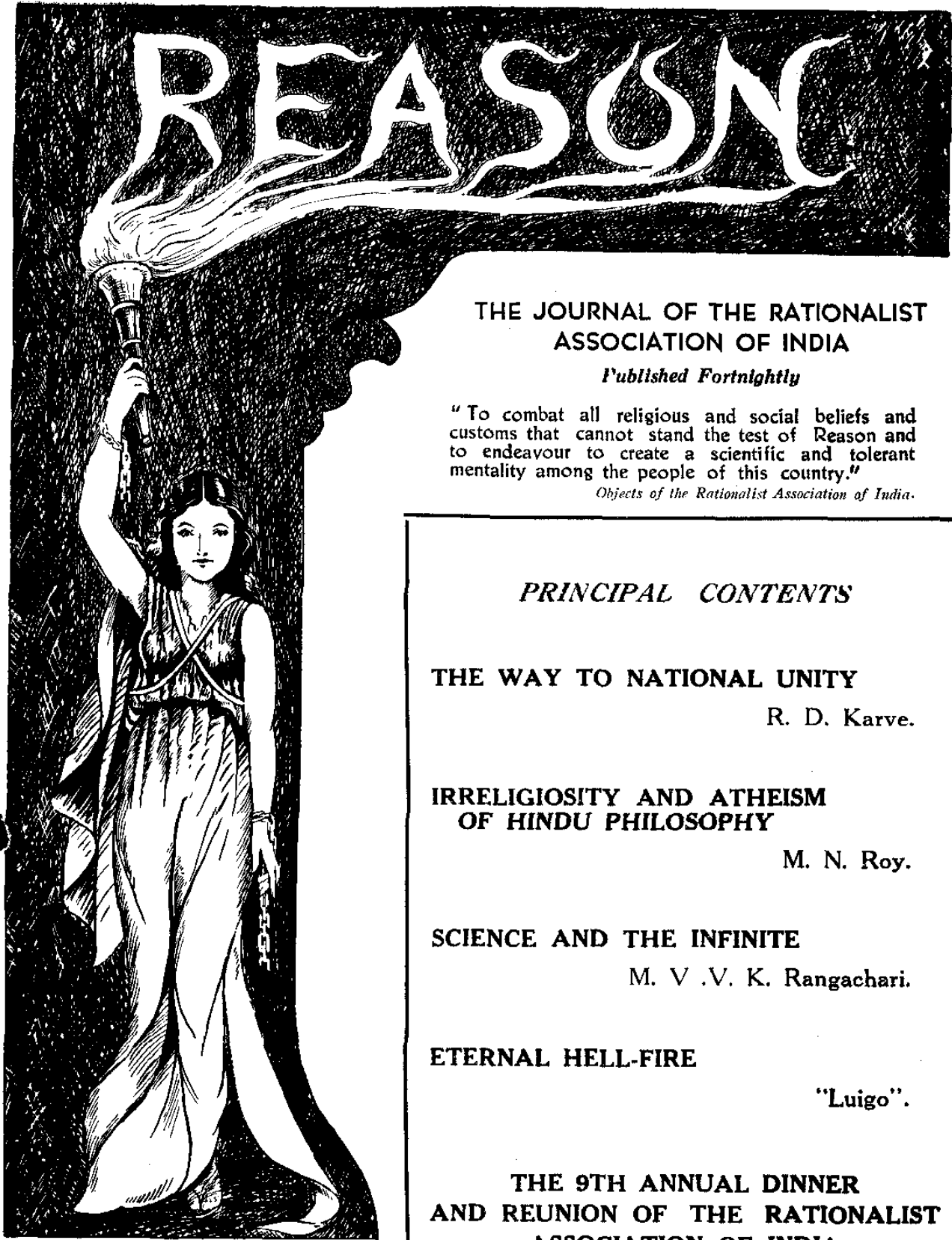
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"Luigo".

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THE WAY TO NATIONAL UNITY

By R. D. Karve

While most people will agree on principle that national unity is a desideratum for India, nobody seems to have any clear idea as to how it is to be achieved. At least the politicians who are supposed to lead their various factions towards that goal seem to be working at cross-purposes. It seems perfectly obvious that the leaders who insist on tacking their religion on to their politics can hardly be sincere in their talks about unity. Religion is everywhere necessarily a line of cleavage, and if people are to come together for some special purpose in spite of their religious differences, they must have the capacity to forget their religion for some time and see that it does not intrude itself where it is not wanted. The Hindu Mahasabha insists on being Hindus even in politics, the depressed classes (the so-called untouchables) insist on getting special treatment, Mahomedans insist on special privileges on some ground or other. This tendency to try to get some advantage out of every possible line of cleavage is hardly conducive to any kind of unity. Even sex is made a line of cleavage and special electorates proposed for women, who have however been sensible enough to protest against it. The Congress, in its anxiety to placate the Mahomedans, is prepared to go to the most absurd lengths, even forcing helpless children to learn the Urdu script, which is unquestionably the most defective script in the world, if we except the Chinese, which can hardly be called a script. All the English distortions of Indian names are due to the various possible readings of the same signs in the Urdu script. But Congress leaders find the beautiful curves of Urdu letters so alluring that they think it their duty to force them on children! In their anxiety to have a common language for India, they manage to forget that all Indian languages including the South Indian have already a vast vocabulary derived from Sanscrit, and insist that the common language, which according to the Mahatma, is yet to be formed, must contain a vast proportion of Persian and Arabic words, which are not understood

even by Mahomedans, except in Northern India. This means more trouble to learn it, and people will never take that trouble except under compulsion. But to the Congress, compulsion comes under non-violence. Hindusthani is very easy to learn as regards grammar, but the insistence on Persian and Arabic words will make it difficult, especially when people want not only these difficult words, but the peculiar system of making plurals etc. along with these words. Even a Mahomedan who does not know any language except Marathi or Gujarati sometimes pretends that his language is Urdu, because he has an idea that it goes with his religion! This is fanaticism more than anything else. But the Mahatma's "inner voice" comes directly from God, and even Mahomedans will not question the authority of this Hindu God so long as it is favourable to them. This question of language is not really of such fundamental importance, as can be easily seen from the examples of Belgium and Switzerland, which have two or three languages in use without fighting about them. But in India, it seems we must fight among ourselves about the smallest details of language, dress, food and what not. Even sporting clubs here are religious and cricket tournaments emphasize these lines of cleavage and encourage quarrels rather than a sporting spirit.

The British government naturally had no interest in patching up lines of cleavage, rather the contrary. They insist on giving you a caste and a religion whether you want it or not. Government always insists on knowing your caste and religion on every possible occasion whenever they can ask anybody to fill up printed forms of any kind. The other day, I had to make a fresh press declaration because "REASON" was to be made a fortnightly, which is perfectly unreasonable, since a monthly journal can be as seditious or obscene or anything else as a fortnightly one. The form of this declaration includes the age, caste and residential address of the editor. Usually, when I am asked to fill up a form involving caste or religion, I write "none" under these headings. But as, in this case, it might mean delay in publishing the journal, I thought it better to

mention the caste in which I was born. In census returns, if you do not fill up these headings properly according to the authorities, they supply the deficiency themselves. I used to think that this was only a detail of the divide-and-rule policy. But I found that even in England during the last war, if a recruit said he had no religion, he was put down as "Church of England" and had to take part in the Church parade. So I had to attribute it to sheer pigheadedness, though I believe the Government realise quite well that religion in India is likely to make the people more amenable to discipline, especially as regards Hindus, who believe in the divine right of kings, even if they are foreign. Perhaps the British people may not appreciate it very much if they learn that there is a superstition among Hindus that the British rule in India is the result of a boon granted by Rama to the monkeys who fought for him against Ravana who had carried away his wife. As a reward for their help, Rama promised them they should rule the whole of India in their future births. Orthodox Hindus assume that the British people who conquered India are the descendants of those monkeys and thus was the boon fulfilled! They are quite willing to accept Darwin's theory to that extent, though of course it does not apply to Hindus, who are descended from the Gods!

In any case, it is the duty of rationalists and nationalists to protest against any practice which tends to emphasize lines of cleavage among Indians, such as caste, creed, dress, food etc. Of course the best way to unity would be to get rid of religion, caste and creed, and though perhaps we cannot get rid of dress, and much less of food, we can learn to be more tolerant as regards differences in dress and food and other things. And whatever may be said against rationalists becoming dogmatists, there is no doubt that the most dogmatic rationalist will never want to break his opponent's head for a difference of opinion as regards the existence of God or anything else, as religious people often do. It is admittedly ridiculous for a rationalist to be dogmatic, but it is none the less true that a rationalistic training

does tend to make people more tolerant even if it does not entirely destroy their dogmatism.

IRRELIGIOSITY AND ATHEISM OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

By M. N. Roy

By Courtesy of "Independent India"

The doctrine of creation out of nothing is an essential element of religious thought. The Bible sets forth this cardinal dogma in the most logical as well as orthodox form. The fullest play is given to the concept of Omnipotence. There is no attempt to tamper or temper it with reason. The very notion being absurd, its absurdity must be manifest in its practical expression, unless its pristine purity is adulterated; and, in that case, the faithful would be so much less religious because of the imperfectness of their faith in the basic dogma of religion. The doctrine of creation out of nothing is the counterpart of the conception of a personal God. This idea is the very essence of religion, and Monotheism is the highest form of religion.

Miracle-mongering is another feature of Christianity, which is usually laughed at by the advocates of "scientific" religion. Hinduism is dogmatically claimed to be the only religion possessing that destructive distinction. If the claim had any foundation of reality, then the distinction would mean the extinction of Hinduism as a religion. As a matter of fact, the positive significance of ancient Hindu philosophy was to liquidate Hinduism as a religion.

Science and faith are mutually exclusive, and there can be no religion without faith. The fantastic idea of a scientific religion is expounded by irreligious spiritualists—that queer breed of modern intellectuals, who pompously deride scientific knowledge, while possessing no faith, who grope blindly in the twilight of the borderland of darkness and light. Miracle-mongering is the practical expression of the faith in God, that is, in God as God the Almighty. Since the world is the creation of an almighty power, not bound by the laws of nature—of space, time and causality—anything can happen any time and anywhere. This belief is the very breath

of religion. Untrammelled by the zeal for rewriting history to fit into a scheme laid a priori, anybody could see that every Hindu even to-day believes in miracles. Otherwise, the face of Mother India would have changed unrecognisably long ago.

The stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata are full of miracles. The epic heroes are miracles personified. The Hindu masses implicitly believe in those stories; it is sinful to doubt their veracity. The modern intellectual confidently talks of the ancient glory of India on the strength of "the historical facts" contained in the epics. The miraculous acts and movements of the epic heroes are considered to offer indisputable evidence in support of the utterly unhistorical contention that several thousand years ago, India attained a level of scientific and technological development not yet surpassed by the modern civilisation. This contention beats the most fundamentalist Christian, in the faith in miracle. In the utter absence of social conditions, requisite for any advance in that direction, the supposed rather imagined, scientific and technological attainments could be possible only as a miracle.

The faith in the supernatural powers of the Yogi is also a faith in miracle. There are few even among the modern educated Indians who would not look upon the usual feats of any ordinary magician (sleight of hand or charlatanery) as evidence invalidating scientific theories; who would not find the hand of God in any natural phenomenon that cannot as yet be scientifically explained. As regards the masses of the Hindu population, even to-day the faith in miracle is as living as it was with the Christians in the early middle ages. For example, faced with illness, individual or epidemic, the vast bulk of the rural population would much rather seek relief in some sort of religious ceremony than rely upon the curative value of medical and hygienic agencies. The supernatural power of Sadhus and San-yasis is a matter of general belief. Otherwise, how could several millions of these parasites still thrive upon the

poverty of the masses. The spell and influence of these religious parasites are not based upon any other spiritual merit than the superstitious belief in their supernatural power. Mahatma Gandhi's great popularity among the masses is only to a very small extent due to the awakening political consciousness. It is mostly due to a widespread belief in his power to do what ordinary mortals cannot,—that is, in his power to do miracles. That is why he has been canonised as a Mahatma.

The belief in miracle is the result of a lack of self-confidence. Had the modern Indians been less addicted to the faith in miracle than the early and mediaeval Christians, they would have shown greater ability to change the dismal conditions of their country. The fact that the bulk of those engaged in the struggle for temporal power have been worshipping for years at the shrine of a Mahatma, proves that they expect to be saved by a miracle.

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any material substance; if one did not implicitly believe, as the corollary to this faith in the Almightiness of God, in all sorts of magic and miracles; then there would arise inevitably the fatal question, how did God create the world?—A question that at once transcends the boundary of religion, and leads sooner or later, directly or indirectly, to naturalism, atheism, materialism, that is, to real philosophy.

Provoked by the doubt inherent in the mystical speculations of the Upanishads, the earlier systems of Hindu philosophy—Vaisheshik and Sankhya—tried to answer the dangerous question without having raised it explicitly. The essence of those two earlier systems of philosophy eventually contributed to the rise of the Buddhist atheism. All the heavy artillery of Vedic fundamentalism had to be put in action for combating, and ultimately destroying, that disruptive doctrine. But Shankaracharya himself realised that his speculative and arbitrary interpretation of the Vedanta Sutras, done with the purpose of combating Buddhism and the semi-materialist systems of philosophy that had gone into its making, could not serve its purpose except by contradicting itself through the postulation of a personal God. Otherwise, even the hallucination of the world could not be "explained" within the limits of religious thought. His pantheistic interpretation of Vedanta, if carried to its logical conclusion, itself leads to materialism. That line of logical development was avoided by the arbitrary relapse to the anthropomorphic conception of God; the retreat was covered by a mass of sophistry and hopeless confusion,—all serving the one purpose of self-deception. Christianity also headed towards the slippery path of idealist philosophy as soon as it left the strictly religious ground, to wander into the labyrinth of theology. But in the beginning, it was a pure form of spiritualism, because of its uncompromising conception of a personal God, and firm attachment to the virgin faith associated with such a pure religious conception.

Denial of the objective reality of the material world is the foundation of

spiritualism. It is divested of its purely dogmatic character only when it is inferred from the doctrine of creation out of nothing, which, in its turn, must be inseparably associated with the idea of a personal God. That which is once created is bound to disappear. It does not really exist. It is a phantom. Transitoriness is identical with unreality. Those are the cardinal principles of religious philosophy. The validity of those arguments depends on the belief in a personal God.

The personal God is the real God, because all the supernatural and the unnatural attributes ascribed to the Supreme Being by spiritualism can be logically associated only with the anthropomorphic concept. The Supreme being is supposed to be beyond all limitations. In order to fit into the role allotted to him by his creators (God is the creation of the religious man), the Supreme Being must be unconditionally free. The belief in the possibility of the creation of the physical universe out of no available material represents the highest concept of freedom, and Omnipotence is born of unlimited freedom. The two conceptions can never be separated without losing force; and they can assume the appearance of reality only in a personal God.

Supernatural powers and attributes must remain empty conceptions, unrealities, so long as they are not conceived as the powers and attributes of a Subject. That is to say, spiritual (supernatural) categories become conceivable only when they are associated with the idea of a personal God. One possessed of the unbounded freedom of creating endless things out of no given substance, is really above, beyond, and uncircumvented by the material being. He is the real spiritual existence par excellence. Creation out of nothing is an act by which the creator is not bound, because there is no casual connection between the two. The personal God does not create out of necessity. He does it out of sheer whim or arbitrariness,—the corollary to his Omnipotence. The freedom of his will is altogether unbounded. Since he creates, not out of necessity, but

of sweet will, he may or may not create. He is not bound to create. Thus he is absolutely free of any material existence. He is an absolutely pure spiritual being. The personal God of strictly monotheistic religions, such as Christianity and Islam, therefore, is not a sign of childish credulity, spiritual inferiority; on the contrary, the concept represents the highest pitch of religious, that is, spiritualist thought. The absurdity is not hidden behind subtle doctrines, nor made to appear plausible in a mirage of mysticism; it is boldly and faithfully carried to its logical climax.

A religion should be measured by religious standards. Spiritualism must be judged by the purity of its spirituality. A body of religious thought that can attain the point of culmination indicated by itself, without ceasing to be strictly religious, that is without deviating from the straight path of faith, is spiritualism of the purest water. So long as religion can stand frankly as itself, on its own merit, without being ashamed of its absurdity, without feeling any necessity of hiding its naked beauty of barbarism in ill-fitting draperies of deception, so long it should be considered as performing a useful social function. After that, it can stand only as an artificial structure obstructing further spiritual progress.

(To be Concluded)

THE 9TH ANNUAL DINNER AND REUNION OF THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

Members of the R. A. I. and their friends met at the Annual Dinner of the Association which was held in the Governor's Pavilion at the Cricket Club of India. Many expressed the wish that all such functions should be held there, as the place is certainly an ideal one for a social gathering. New acquaintances were made and old ones renewed. In spite of the many absentees the attendance more than equalled that on previous occasions.

Among those present were:—

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Dr. A. S. Erulkar, Prof. H. V. Hampton, Prof. S. K. Muranjan, Dr. G. Coelho, Prof. R. D. Karve, Mr. D. R. D. Wadia, Mrs. A. S.

Erulkar, Miss. L. Erulkar, Mr. J. S. Warden, Mr. V. D. Satghare, Mrs. D. R. D. Wadia, Mr. R. I. D'Avoine, Mr. E. D'Avoine, Miss Mistry, Dr. M. G. Pradhan, Mr. Moolji, Dr. S. B. Gadgil, Dr. D. R. Chaubal, Mr. Raptakos, Mr. J. M. Patuck, Dr. N. D. Patel, Mr. J. Ezekiel, Mr. Rashid Gulmahomed, Mr. A. S. Patheria, Mr. M. Jacob, Mr. A. Husein, Mr. A. H. Doctor, Mr. D. B. Thakore and a few others.

At the General Meeting just before the Dinner where Dr. C. L. D'Avoine presided the following resolution was unanimously passed.

"At a time when we witness everywhere the suppression of the supremacy of Reason, and the increasing curtailment of human liberty, this gathering of Rationalists in India expresses its sympathy and solidarity with the democratic forces in all parts of the world and urges upon all rationalists in this vast country to unite in the cause of intellectual freedom and social justice."

The dinner itself was excellent starting with "Creme Asparagus Darwin" every course reminded the diners of a prominent Freethought personality. Ingersoll, Voltaire, Emile Zola, Bradlaugh and Paine followed and as 'Cafe Cohen' was being served, the chairman Dr. C. L. D'Avoine called upon Prof. S. K. Muranjan to speak.

Prof. S. K. Muranjan

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, while thanking the honorary Secretaries for giving me an opportunity of speaking on this occasion, I cannot but blame them for their irrational behaviour in expecting a speech from me after such an excellent dinner. Experience of daily lecturing has taught me that the best speeches are always delivered on a not too well-fed stomach.

I was also much perplexed as to the appropriate subject on which I could offer a few observation. Such perplexity as I felt was however partly resolved by an expression of contempt which fell from an intelligent and highly cultured lady-friend when in an unfortunate moment I happened to mention to her about my engagement here for dinner this evening. It was clear that what

troubled my friend was her belief that only people devoid of respectability would fore-gather here. For a few minutes I trembled in my shoes at the prospect of being altogether omitted from all invitations to teas or dinners in the future. But as luck would have it, she inquired about the persons I was likely to meet here and when she found that one among us belonged conspicuously to the profession to which her husband himself belongs with equal conspicuousness, her horror gave place to resignation and I for one breathed a deep sigh of relief that all was not yet over after all.

Well, what matters to people — particularly ladies, — is not the truth or untruth of an idea or outlook. They want to be assured that it is compatible with association with the so-called respectable circles. Make an idea or outlook "respectable" and crowds of people will adopt it.

I have always wondered whether many religions, an immense variety of food, dress and behaviour habits do not constitute (in this country) a fruitful soil in which a rational outlook will germinate easily. No doubt, on account of dense ignorance, these are a source of great embarrassment to us to-day. But the inquiring mind of man is bound to awaken one day and ask inevitable questions like these—can cow-slaughter be more sinful than goat-slaughter? Can the exposure of one part of the body be an enhancement of beauty in one part of the country and a heinous sin in another part? Can certain practices be acceptable to God in one section of the populace and altogether condemned according to the inspired revelations of another section of the community? I think when these questions do begin to be repeated, most people will realise the hoax which religions have played on their ignorance and abjure the prime sources of all errors. And, remember, that departures from trodden ways are much easier in a country of immense variety like ours than in countries of Europe where people have the same food, dress and behaviour modes.

Indeed, I am persuaded that it is a capital error to suppose that religion has

really a firm hold on the mind of man in this country. One of the most pleasant experiences under this sky is to watch how on every suitable opportunity the common spirit of humanity asserts itself irrespective of any religion. This is specially so among women in this land. If married women of different religions assemble and the men are got out of the way, it is marvellous to observe how their trade union spirit soon asserts its supremacy over religion and a concord is established which ignores many of the apparently deep-seated prejudices of our people. It is not till some calculating and scheming minds try to exploit the ignorance of the masses for the satisfaction of their own diseased and perverted psychosis that we stumble on our notorious communal and religious difficulties.

Indeed, a process of mutual cancellation is already visible among the younger generation of this country. They appreciate the fact that they are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsees merely because their parents were so and that their parents were so because their grand-parents were so and thus ad infinitum. I believe they are quite tired of this unmitigated bunkum and only await a proper guidance. It is for our association to step in and supply the need of the hour.

Prof. H. V. Hampton

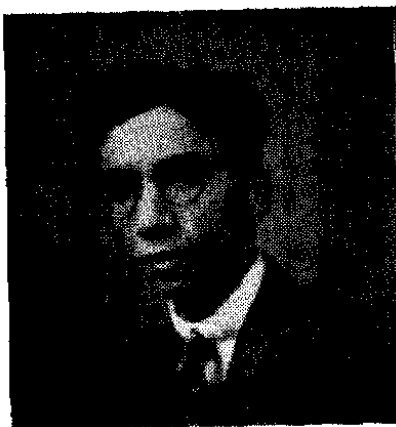
Prof. Hampton made the most popular speech of the evening, full of that delightful humour which marks all his speeches and which kept all present smiling throughout. In the course of his speech he said that rationalists are looked upon with contempt and are supposed to possess many undesirable qualities. But looking around he found nothing to corroborate that view. After narrating some interesting anecdotes in a very humorous style he further said that present day rationalist literature tended to become narrow and even dogmatic. Rationalists should be more tolerant and sympathetic with those with whom they disagreed. Most believers are so because they simply cannot see eye to eye with us. He himself was convinced that most religious beliefs are not only not true but that some of them are even harmful. He believed that the secular outlook would
(Contd. on Page 80.)

**The 9th Annual Dinner and Reunion of
The Rationalist Association of India.**

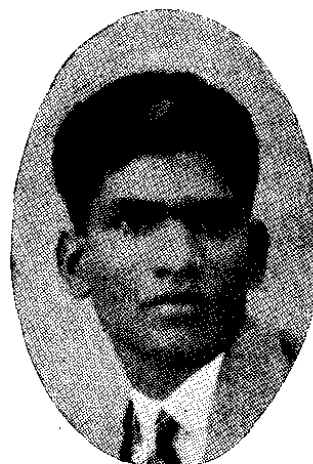


Row Facing: (Left to Right) Mr. D. R. D. Wadia, Dr. N. D. Patel, Mrs. D. R. D. Wadia, Prof. H. V. Hampton, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Dr. A. S. Erulkar, Prof. S. K. Muranjan, Mrs. A. S. Erulkar, Mr. A. Solomon, Mr. V. D. Satghare, Miss. L. Erulkar, Mr. R. I. D'Avoine.

Second Row: (Left to Right) Dr. Pradhan, Dr. Chaubal, Miss. S. Mistry, Mr. J. S. Warden, Mr. Raptakos, Mr. G. C. Moolji, Prof. R. D. Karve, Mr. P. Thakore and Mr. A. Doctor.



Mr. Abraham Solomon



Mr. Milton David

Joint Honorary Secretaries

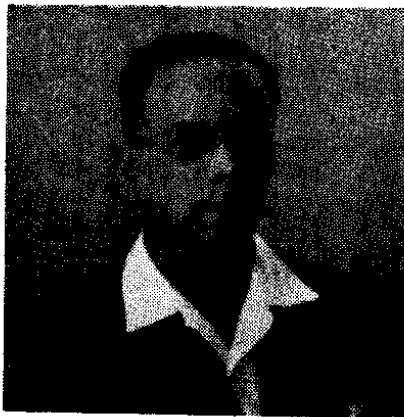


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Editor :

Prof. R. D. Karve, M. A.

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Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

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NOTES AND NEWS

The death of the Pope last month has been widely noticed. There is no doubt that this was due to the democratic countries exploiting the occasion for propagandic purpose. They profess to have seen in the late Pope one of the greatest men of the time which is pure moonshine.

The memory of the world seems to be very short indeed. It has even forgotten that the Pope was at first an ardent supporter of Hitler, actually making a concordat with him in which the Church was going to gain much at the expense of other schools of thought and belief. The Freethinkers for instance were marked down for much trouble and humiliation. For years the Pope never uttered a word in condemnation of Hit-

ler's treatment of the Jews. It was when Hitler proved false to the Pope that the latter's indignation waxed strong and drew from him the condemnation that has so much elated the democratic countries.

It was the same with Mussolini. The Pope never condemned the rape of Abyssinia. On the contrary he allowed his Cardinals and Bishops to bless the Battleships and army of Italy for that expedition and at the Cathedral of Milan a Te Deum was actually sung when Italy had conquered that country.

The democratic countries have fallen on evil days indeed when they must catch hold of every straw to create public opinion against the totalitarian States.

Among the many books that have been written exposing the political policy of the late Pope we cannot do better than recommend to our readers "The Papacy in Politics To-day" by Joseph McCabe.

His Grace the Arch-bishop of Bombay delivered a lecture on "Anti-Semitism and the Catholic Church" held under the auspices of the Jewish Club on February 10. Having read the three half-columns' report in the "Evening News" thrice over, we have to confess that we simply could not make head or tail of what he was driving at. It may be due to our inability to understand. But then we invite some of our readers to have a try.

"In defining the attitude of the Catholics to Jews," says the **Evening News** reporter "His Grace distinguished between the official attitude of the Catholic Church, and what he termed to be the popular version of the same."

"The attitude to the Jews as to all non-Catholics is determined", says His Grace "by Catholic teaching on toleration." Well, we all know what "Catholic toleration" has been and still is. We had a sample of it during the last International Freethought Congress.

His Grace further said that he was "faced with a phenomenon" he finds "hard to understand."

"Among the fomenters of anti-Semitism, for instance in France, have often been strongly nationalist Catholics. That is a fact—the explanation I do not know." But we can hardly believe that His Grace is ignorant of the history of his own religion. Anti-Semitism came into existence with the rise of Christianity. It is Christian in origin and has its basis in the biblical myth that the Jews killed Jesus.

Throughout the history of anti-Semitism the line of attack has changed perpetually. But no one who makes a little study of history will deny that its original grounds were religious—not personal, not social, not economic, not political. Anti-Semitism will disappear with the disappearance of the Jew, and finally with the disappearance of Christianity in all its brands. We recommend to those interested one of the latest "Penguin Specials" by Louis Golding on "The Jewish Problem." Though Free-thinkers will differ from much in the latter part of the book it will well repay perusal.

We commend to everyone the following words of Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor of Bombay, from his inaugural address at the fourth session of the Quinquennial Universities Conference held in Bombay.

"One of the chief qualities which an academic training should give is the power to express, without fear or favour, the conviction of truth; to state a case fairly and logically; to allow the person from whom one differs the same privilege and to support with all the means at one's hand the right of everyone to speak his mind without interruption, provided that toleration, sincerity and care have gone to the forming of any

Our congratulations to Prof. H. V. Hampton, our member, on his appointment as Secretary to the Federal Public Services Commission vice Mr. H. Hamill, proceeding on leave for a year.

Prof. Hampton was appointed to the Indian Educational Service in 1913 and was Professor in the Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, and Elphinstone College, Bombay, from 1914 to 1920. For the next three years he was Vice-Principal of the Karnatak College, Dharwar, being later appointed Principal. He was appointed Principal of the Secondary Training College in 1930. Prof. Hampton edited the *Indian Education* from 1919 to 1923 and was a contributor to the *Year Book of Education* from 1935 to 1938.

During the eight years he has been Principal of the Training College, the institution has expanded to almost twice its size. He has been closely associated with teachers and their organisations and was still lately President of the Bombay Teachers' Association.

A.S.

OBITUARY.

Vivian Phelips.

It is indeed with deep regret we record the death of our old and distinguished member Mr. Vivian Phelips. He was a valiant and tireless Rationalist who did a lot for the cause by the publication of his well-known work "The Churches and Modern Thought," a book that was hailed as one of the classics of Rationalism. His other works are "Modern Knowledge and Old Beliefs" and "Concerning Progressive Revelation."

Even until only a few days before his death he was constantly working for the "best of causes." Our readers know him from his several contributions to "Reason" and our Association owes much to his support and interest in the Rationalist movement in this country.

Mr. Phelips died on January 27, at Montacute, Cape Town, South Africa. He was over 80 years old. He was cremated according to his wishes without any ceremonies or flowers.

We offer our heartfelt sympathies to his bereaved family.

A. S.

(Contd. from Page 75.)

one day prevail and that it is the only sensible outlook on life.

Dr. A. S. Erulkar.

Dr. Erulkar speaking next during the course of his speech said that Rationalism is relative. Everyone was irrational sometimes to a greater or a lesser degree. We must try and be as less irrational as possible. He was more interested in the broader outlook of Rationalism. We must be rationalists not only as far as religion is concerned but in all spheres of life such as food, dress, social institutions and politics. As regards India being a fruitful soil for Rationalism it depends on our methods. People in India believed in mysticism rather than any particular religion. We find people professing one religion believing in and worshipping saints and gods of other religions. Had our Association a Mahatma or a Mullah as its president or some mystical ceremonies we would have had a large membership. But as that is not possible, India is not a fruitful soil.

Referring to the horrible persecution in Central Europe in the name of race, religion and political creed, he said he has come to realize that Europe is still savage. He was brought up in the belief that Europe was more tolerant and therefore more advanced in civilization than Asia. But recent events had disillusioned him.

Man had been a beast for millions and millions of years. Attempts to civilize him were only a few thousand years old. No wonder he is still very largely the beast; as much in Europe as elsewhere; perhaps more so than in India.

In conclusion he paid a tribute to the energy, enthusiasm and work of the younger members and said that they should be given more support and help by the elder members of the Association.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine.

Dr. C. L. D'Avoine made a brief speech. He said that he did not think we rationalists should be so tolerant as to the extent of ignoring the intolerance of believers. He remarked that there is a stiff fight against Reason going on in the West and when one remembers that even in England the 25th International Freethought Congress was vehemently

opposed by both Catholics and Protestants they going so far as to even requesting the authorities to ban the sessions of the Congress, he was of opinion that we should be militant rationalists to combat such opponants. The events which occurred previous to and during the holding of the Congress were a lesson to us to be always vigilant. He then referred to the work of the younger members with appreciation and wished the Association prosperity and hoped that in future we would meet in greater numbers.

SCIENCE AND THE INFINITE

By M. V. V. K. Rangachari

(Continued from page 65)

Brahman is indestructible, immutable, eternal, yet its nature is to evolve into life. It is a super-sacrifice of Karma that generates the beings (Gita, VIII, 3) "Myself residing in the body, am the super-sacrifice." (Ibid, VIII, 4). The evolution into finite beings that fill the universe of matter is certainly a sacrifice of infinitude. We feel the atmosphere of Christian Theology, which brought the Son into being, and that was the Super-sacrifice for the atonement of Man with God. The symbolism runs in parallel grooves. Whatever great and good in nature is ever produced, that is all the work of a fragment of the divine splendour (X, 41). The idea of this fragmentation by birth into the finite world is worked out in XV, 7: "In the world of life, a fragment of Mine evolves into an immortal spirit and attracts the six senses including the mind veiled in matter (Prakriti). In fact the whole manifested universe is altogether but a fragment of Myself. (X, 42) To revert to the modern conception of the atom which is likened to the solar system wherein the proton stands for the sun, and the electrons represent the planets, at relatively huge distances of empty space, we are told that the proton magnified to the size of a plum, would lead to the electrons assuming the size of bees flying at about a hundred yards distance—we are yet to penetrate into the mysteries of that intervening emptiness that holds the proton-electron dualism in its grip. Nor may we feel confi-

dent that we have mastered the contents of that overhanging immensity, the cold depths of the inter-stellar and intergalaxial space, which is dark beyond measure despite the immense radiations from the sun and the other stars. With the sun, 250,000,000 tons of its substance is poured each minute into these dark depths that still seem none the lighter. We have no means of giving the figures of wasteful burning away of other stars. Yet these are infinitely less than the millions of light-years that remain in the cold dark depths of empty space. The electron is but a small fragment of the atom, the earth is a small bit of the solar family, and the splendour of the wheel that comprehends the proton-electron round, and the extreme reaches of the radius of Neptune and the recently found Pluto, remain great. Greater still are the staggering figures that run in space outside, between the stars in the galactic system, and other galaxies and nebulae. "Ekamshena sthito jagat" A single fragment pervades the whole uni-

verse, and the rest is darkness, the remainder of the Being is unmanifest." (Gita, X, 42).

Humility is said to result from the belief in the existence of God. But the stupendous mystery of nature should be enough to impress on any reasonable mind the littleness of its achievement in trying to scratch its exterior. We do not require to be told that there is mystery further. Wherefore did the planet arise, and life on it, and man? We project the mind into the cosmic ray, and strive to project the gondola into the stratosphere, to measure, by means of electrometers, the extent of stellar radiation on to the earth. An ancient Hindu eschatology is supposed to have traced the march of life from the sun (and possibly the moon too?) on to the earth, entering first the raindrop in the cloud. And the drop of rain enters the soil, and life enters the grainseed through it. The grain and plant-life produce and sustain the animal and man. Is the cosmic radiation the means of com-

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munication of life between the planet and the skies above—the sun and the stars? Are the rockets sent into the stratosphere going to discover how inanimate, inorganic matter converted itself into a live organism, and by what means the animal became possessed of the human soul? What, in other words, are the transformations that the factories in these remote giant-bodies are turning out in relation to our tiny abode with its flicker of human and other life? Faced with questions like these, the humility of science is more divine than God.

An objection against founding religious doctrine upon the basis of scientific theory rests on the absence of finality within the domain of science. As Prof. Hickson puts it: "The fundamental concepts of physics are indeed in a state of flux." Science constantly revises its cosmology. "It will probably adopt a queerer and queerer world-view as time goes on," remarks Prof. J.B.S. Haldane. And if that is so, the religionist raises the question, how an impregnable fortress of faith may be built on the shifting sands of scientific opinion. In their outlook, it would appear that science and religion tend to keep separate houses. While the one hankers after stability, the other affects change; while the one strives for peace, the other is always troubled by questions beset with doubt. It would indeed appear very difficult to reach a working formula whereby the restlessness characteristic of science may be translated into the heaven of pleasure and contentment in the harmony of religious life. If scientific humanism ever acquires its ample denotation, that day will have seen that formula at work, which shall have translated the engines of destruction of our martial world into productive machinery standing against human want, disease and dissension. But so long as religion holds aloof and away from scientific thought, leaving inventions severely alone to be handled by greed, power and the arm of exploitation, so long will the day of humanism remain on its wings. Divorced from its legitimate yoke, science is so far prostituting its career in the service of the war-lords of

the world, as if to say: "I am the destruction and the end." It is not enough that science should mean true knowledge, correct so far as it goes. It is further necessary that it should feel aright, and further to lead aright the world in its feelings as well as in the content of its mental concepts. It will no longer do for the totality of scientific pursuit to remain content with saying that the moral or aesthetic meaning of the picture of life is not its province. The Mathematician-Thinker spilling 'ideal' dots, or lines or commas has one day to wake himself up from the flow of his conic sections rudely shaken by the mess that he made with the world with tear-gas and giant shells.

Back to the life of the Hindu Yogi, supremely unmindful of the provisions of the world, for there is abundance of them when rightly dispersed, the scientific spirit of the age may well divert its forces from the way of injury to life and happiness to the more fruitful pursuits of creative peace.

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ETERNAL HELL-FIRE

By Luigo.

The dogma of eternal hell-fire is an intellectual sacrilege. And yet any one with the merest psychological bent will readily understand that it is precisely this terrible fear, which is instilled in the Christian in his infancy and kept growing with his youth, that makes him embrace its absurdities. Under this threat that sanguinely promises to damn one for eternity, absolute abjectness is possible to be enforced for the comparatively short but full span of life.

But nobody even remotely intellectual has ever accepted the Christian dogma of eternal hell-fire even for a moment; nobody even Christian or otherwise. Whatever specious arguments the Churches may bring to elucidate or prop this doctrine or drive it into the plastic and fearful hearts of the young, yet in his heart of hearts the Christian has instinctively felt that this dogma, even though he has been told that it emanates from God himself, can never be true. For, if Christianity can argue that one reason for the existence of God is that man instinctively feels his presence or existence, then why will not Christianity also accept the argument that there cannot be eternal hell-fire as this is instinctively revolting to all that is noble and intellectual in man? But this, though an ingenious but threadbare contrivance, Christianity will not do. The doctrines of Christianity were never cohesive and Christianity therefore is finding the ground sink hopelessly under its feet.

It is very well to argue that God being Omnipotent and infinite, an offence that is committed against him merits in consequence an infinite punishment. But in order that one should deserve an infinite punishment, must not one understand the gravity of his sin in a like measure? Must not he know also that he whom he offends actually exists or not? . . . Besides man will be himself and any punishment that is not consistent with his own philosophy is logically absurd and purely a priestly fabrication.

The Biblical statement that proudly incorporates the words "Broad is the way that leadeth to damnation", little as the artful clergy know it, is the first nail in Christianity's coffin. If your boast is that almost everybody goes to hell, as though it were the delight of God or as though the human model God made were hopelessly faulty, everything is ridiculously absurd, the justification of Christianity above all. . . . And yet the pulpit makes a stupid and glorious boast of this tiresome and disgusting fact!

Men were only accustomed up to a certain point to hear that hell was only made up of fire. Christ even, who being God and therefore should have known better what he himself made, spoke only of fire. But latterly, certain women saints come out with the striking revelation that certain parts of hell are ice-frozen. St. Bridget, if I remember aright, is one of them. That these women saints saw something new in hell is not at all surprising, as women ordinarily, saints or otherwise, as we all know, see in their visions and dreams many strange and incredible things. . . . But this strange revelation makes the stupidity or ridiculousness of the whole affair so obvious and conclusive.

FORM OF BEQUEST TO THE R.A.I.

Readers of Reason who are in sympathy with the objects of the Rationalist Association of India are invited to remember the organization when making their Wills. Appended is a form of bequest which may be useful to friends who are desirous of allocating a part of their estate to assist in the dissemination of rational views on religion and cognate subjects:—

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PROFESSIONS AND PERFORMANCES

By R. D. Karve

Readers will forgive me if I cite a personal experience as to how people give effect to their professed opinions, and I am only giving it because it is of some interest to rationalists. For more than an year, I have been a member of a small organization in Bombay, whose name I am unable to disclose just yet, but who profess political, racial and religious tolerance and consider "freedom as the breath of life of literary expression" and who stand for "liberty of expression throughout the world and view with apprehension the continual attempts to encroach upon that liberty in the name of social security and international strategy." This body "affirms its belief that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organised political and economic order renders a free criticism of administrations and institutions imperative from all points of view." Fine words, which every liberal-minded man will subscribe to. And believing these to be the genuine sentiments of the members, I was very glad to join.

After this, readers will hardly believe what follows. About two months back, I received a confidential letter from the secretary, saying: "The Managing Committee of the . . . has under consideration the desirability of your continuing as a member of the . . . ; in view of the quality of certain of your literary activities. They will appreciate your meeting them to discuss the matter privately and confidentially at the office of one of their members . . ." and the address and the time was mentioned. This letter arrived with a number of seals and doubly enclosed, to emphasize its confidential nature. I did not quite understand at first why all this secrecy was required. I wrote a strong letter to the secretary, protesting against this attempted censorship of my writings, which was diametrically opposed to the principles professed by that body, and saying that I considered it rank hypocrisy. However, I agreed to meet them if they still desired it, as I was myself rather cu-

rious to see what face these people could put upon their conduct. Having received a reply in the affirmative, I went at the appointed time and was confronted with representatives of all the important communities of Bombay, Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis, Europeans: five members in all, including the Secretary. One member of the Committee was absent. Under a rather curious rule, the Committee consisting of five persons has the power to expel a member by a two-thirds vote out of the members present at a special meeting called for the purpose. This particular meeting, I was assured, was not for the purpose of expelling me, but just for a friendly talk, which turned out to be a warning to me that if I did not resign of my own accord, they may be compelled to expel me. The rule which gives them that power says: "If the conduct of any member shall, in the opinion of the Committee . . . be injurious to the character and interests of the Association, the Committee shall be empowered . . ." The Committee told me that some members found my writings very objectionable and thought it undesirable that I should be a member. Naturally I told them that after all their talk (in print) about liberty of expression and the desirability of free criticism of administrations and institutions, they had no right to sit in judgment on my writings and that their conduct did not at all show that tolerance which they preached. To this, one of them replied that freedom does not mean licence and that since I had been tried and convicted for so-called obscenity, I had passed the bounds of freedom. I pointed out that several of their members were Congressmen who had not only been convicted, but had been in jail, while I had not had that honour. They argued that political offences were on a different level, to which I replied that for people who advocated freedom of criticism, so-called obscenity should not be a greater crime, since my writings were always couched in decent language and there had never been any suggestion to the contrary, even when I was convicted. One of the members, a lady, had brought copies of my own Marathi magazine and confronted me

with the nude pictures in it, asking me whether they were not obscene. Of course I said I would not have put them in if I had thought them obscene, and besides they were reproductions of pictures publicly exhibited in Art and Photographic saloons in the big cities of the world. Besides, in my opinion, there is no such thing as obscenity. It depends on the point of view. Later on, I sent them a quotation from a book reviewed elsewhere in this issue: "Obscenity is always and exclusively a quality of the accusing mind—never a quality that inheres in, or emanates from, that which is accused" (Theodore Schroeder).

A Mahomedan member of the Committee, who happens to be a barrister, wanted to trap me in legal fashion by asking me, just for information, he said, whether I advocated pre-marital or extra-marital relations. I naturally refused to submit to a cross-examination and told him he could study my writings if he was anxious to know my views. The implied immorality of my views could certainly not be objectionable to a Mahomedan, since his religion allows a man four wives and any number of concubines in addition, and a concubine is certainly extra-marital and may also be pre-marital! Nor can Hindus object to these since Hinduism allows any number of wives and concubines.

The lady member had also brought a cutting from the Bombay Chronicle—a scurrilous attack on me to which I had replied, but she had not seen the reply. She pointed out that my anonymous assailant had called my writings pornographic. It seems the opinion of a man who dares not sign his name acquires a value when it is printed! Another charge against me was that I advocated birth-control and even sold the necessary appliances, which was deprecated as "commercial." I pointed out that writing or selling books was equally commercial and that members of the Committee themselves would have to plead guilty to that. But obviously no arguments could convince such people and I finally left them to take what steps they liked against me, only telling them that I would

be obliged to expose their hypocrisy publicly if they thought it fit to expel me.

One can at least understand people who say that there should not be any liberty of expression except for orthodoxy. Religious people may consider their religion as the only way to salvation and try to prevent all counter-propaganda from the best of motives. One may call them bigoted, but their point of view is understandable. But when people pretend that they are all for freedom of speech and writing and then try to dictate to others, it is difficult to understand them. Are they merely hypocrites, or are they cheating themselves as well? Slogans have a sort of mystic attraction even for people who have not the slightest intention of acting up to them. It takes some intelligence to analyse one's own thoughts, but people who do not know their own minds can hardly be counted on to carry out any principles that may be laid down for their guidance and such persons certainly do not deserve to be on any committees. It seems to me that if anybody deserves expulsion, it is the members of the Committee who refuse to carry out the professed principles

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of a body and take advantage of the wording of a law to act arbitrarily. I pointed out to the Committee that, considering the principles laid down as regards freedom of expression, the words "conduct of a member" in the rule quoted above could only refer to his personal conduct, not to his literary activities or his personal views on any subject. Even the lawyers on the Committee seemed incapable of seeing this obvious truth, or perhaps they were wilfully blind. One of these lawyers explained the reason of the secrecy they had observed, the double seals on letters and so on. He said that if this question was raised in an open meeting of the members, it would amount to a libel! This shows how sure they were of their own position!

THE FARCE OF PROHIBITION

By C. L. D'Avoine.

The decision of the Government of Bombay to enforce complete Prohibition in the City and Suburbs of Bombay by the first of August next has created quite a consternation among the people.

To achieve this, the Government is going to embark on a financial hazard that may prove its undoing. To compensate for the loss of revenue which the liquor trade produces, it is going to raise certain taxes which people consider so burdensome as to ruin business and property owners. This venture is also going to throw thousands into unemployment while it is going to ruin people who have invested a lot of money in the liquor trade.

Since it has made up its mind to introduce that measure, come what may, the Ministry is adamant to all reasonable consideration and is determined to enforce it. Like God, the Ministry considers itself omnipotent and omniscient and professes to have thought of the scheme in all its aspects. For us, Rationalists, the enforcement of Prohibition in the manner the Government contemplates is utterly objectionable. We feel that it will be a serious interference with the liberty of people, their social habits and customs. In a

country like India, where these social habits and customs are based on religious tenets, and we feel that certain communities, whose religions forbid them to use alcohol, are taking advantage of their position and power to enforce their religious taboos on people not of their conviction and belief. This is pure intolerance and if pushed too far may amount to tyranny.

Take for instance, the case of the Parsis and Christians whose social habits and customs differ so much from those of the Hindus and Mahomedans. While these two last mentioned communities profess to abhor alcohol, the Parsis and the Christians do make use of the same in their social functions and religious ceremonies. A Mahomedan or a Hindu would transgress the rule of society in trying to force his religious taboo on such people and this would rightly be resented as an intolerant and impertinent act on his part. This is exactly what the Ministry is going to do with the Parsis, Christians and others who are not tied down by religious restrictions with regard to the use of alcohol and wine. For us, Rationalists, this is so intolerable as to be unbearable.

The Prohibitionists tell us that the drink evil is so bad in Bombay as to require drastic eradication. Is not this a gross exaggeration of the actual state of things? Who are the drunkards they have in mind and in which communities are they to be found? Ask the question and you will find that an answer is not forthcoming. As a matter of fact, the drink evil is not as bad as the Prohibitionists will have us believe. The population of Bombay being mostly composed of Hindus and Mahomedans, people whose religion forbid them to drink, the drunkards, whom the Prohibitionists have in mind, must be sought among the Parsis, and the Christians including the Europeans who form the rest of the inhabitants of Bombay. Are there so many drunkards in those communities as to require policemen to keep them straight? Such, of course, is not the case. Among the lower classes of most communities a small percentage

be addicted to drink and other vices, but is the problem so bad as to require the vigilance of the policeman on all the others who are not sunk in drink?

We have in Bombay about a couple of lakhs of labourers who hail from the districts. It is stated that a large proportion of these people is so addicted to drink as to require the contemplated Government measure. If they are really so addicted, surely the social workers among them could do a lot to ameliorate their condition. The Government could do something to lessen the temptations for drink in their surroundings; but it is certainly absurd to restrict the whole population because a small percentage of it, mostly menials, cannot control themselves.

Some people who are inclined to favour Prohibition tell us that since the majority wish it, we must bow down to their wishes. We, Rationalists, above all, cannot accept meekly such a dictum, for being ourselves in a minority, the majority could impose anything they like on us. In other words, to submit passively to such a thing is simply to revert to the times when the majority could simply do what they liked and compel the minority to obey their dictates in all matters however outrageous they were.

Another lame argument is that Prohibition will be for the good of the people and therefore one must sacrifice one's individual liberty for the general good. This argument would have had some weight if the necessity for a sublime sacrifice really existed, though we, Rationalists, do not believe in vicarious sacrifices of this nature if more sensible methods could be found to remedy the evil. The drink evil as pointed by the Prohibitionists only exists in the heated imagination of these people and nothing more.

It is clear that these people are out to play to the gallery in order to show that they have succeeded in doing something for the public good which the former Ministry could not achieve. In order to make their hare blained scheme a success, they and their sup-

porters are indulging in all sorts of extravagant talks and childish doings. What can be more ridiculous than these performances of burning the effigy of the "Demon of Drink" and propaganda with loud speakers and so forth. The burning of the "Demon of Drink", which is nothing but sympathetic magic, appeals immensely to children and imbeciles and small wonder that the Prohibition campaigns are much appreciated by urchins.

We shall conclude by giving an example of the extravagant and exaggerated talk of these people. The Hon. Mr. Munshi, for instance, is reported in the papers of the 7th instant to have said that Prohibition has been such a success in Ahmedabad that although the revenue has lost 120 lakhs, the merchants have gained 320 lakhs "owing to the increased purchasing power of those addicted to drink." These addicts according to Mr. Munshi were to be found in 424 families who now save their money to enrich the merchants. This shows that each of those families had saved from drink in less than a year more than Rs. 75,000 to purchase from the merchants! Just think of it!

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VIVIAN PHELIPS A Great Rationalist

In the death of Mr. Vivian Phelps Rationalism loses one of its most valued pioneers and propagandists. His well-known work "**The Churches and Modern Thought**" first published in 1906, and later published in a revised form in the Thinkers' Library, still enjoys a wide circulation. Born on March 31, 1860, he was educated at Wellington College, King's School, Canterbury, and the R.I. E.C., Cooper's Hill. He entered the Indian Public Works Department in 1881 and retired after a full term of service, in 1903.

During the Great War, when he was in England, Mr. Phelps was first a Special Constable. Then, he devoted himself to attending to the wounded Indians who were convalescing near London. Finally he took a commission, and was for a time in charge of an Indian Labour Corps at the front, from which he was invalided.

When he took up his residence in South Africa he devoted special attention to the work of spreading Rationalism in that country, the progress of which is largely due to his energy and enthusiasm. In fact there are few Freethought organisations in the world with which he was not connected. Nearly half his life-time was devoted to the cause of Rationalism throughout the world.

Among the tributes that were forthcoming from his many friends there were several from those who did not share his views. For instance the following from Rev. R. Balmforth appeared in the **Cape Times** for January 31.

"The death of Vivian Phelps must have come as a great surprise to many of his friends, I did not know that he was ill and now I am blaming myself that I did not acknowledge his last letter to me, thinking that I should surely see him soon. Now, the old cry comes to my lips—"Too late".

I have not known Mr. Phelps personally very long, only since he came out to live at Pinelands a few years ago. But I knew his best and well-known

work, "**The Churches and Modern Thought**," long before that, I believe he spent most of his professional life in the Indian Civil Service. But he must have made the study of Comparative Religion almost his life's work.

For the above-named work shows an amount of reading, research, and study which must have occupied a great many years. It has had a wide circulation and even his critics expressed their appreciation of the spirit and temper in which it was written. Mark Twain is said to have read it three times and advised all his friends to buy or borrow it.

Of his two later works, Mr. Phelps was kind enough to send me the proof-sheets, and he came to consult me on one or two points on which he was in doubt. I discovered then how careful he was in his methods of thought and work and how anxious to verify his facts, and to be fair to his opponents. He was an Agnostic, and belonged to the school of Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, John Stuart Mill, Professor T. M. Huxley, Professor Tyndell, W. Kingdon Clifford, George Eliot, Arthur Hugh Clough and many others of like mind.

To the great questions of God and Immorality he had the courage to say: "I do not know." And who are we that we should judge such men? At the graveside all our words and phrases sound as intellectual counters, and play-things beside the inner impulses of the heart and the aspirations of the spirit.

Vivian Phelps had a most loveable personality—kindly, modest, retiring, good-humoured, single-minded in his search for truth. He believed with his whole soul in "the United States of the World and the Brotherhood of Man," and echoed in his writing Robert Burns' "A man's a man for a' that."

One can best think of him as a spiritual fellow with Abou Ben Adhem in Leigh Hunt's well-known poem—how, on being told by the Angel that Abou's name was not "in the Book of those who love the Lord." Abou replied, "Write me then, as one who loves his
(Contd. on Page 92).

REASON

(Estd. 1931)

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Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- S. W. Willatts.** (New Queensland) Thanks for letter and cuttings. Very interesting. The exploiters of human ignorance are now making use of modern technique, spot-lights and all with plenty of sex-appeal thrown in. Hollywood had better look-out.
- R. S. Fontes** (Noa Goa) Thanks for addresses of likely new readers. Copies being sent.
- K. L. Khanna** (Quetta) Thanks. Please note that the subscription to "Reason" is Rs. 2/- We are considering the reduction of subscription to the R. A. I. but wonder if it is possible just yet. A minimum capital is necessary for the smooth running of any institution which also has a journal to publish. And that the R.A.I. does not possess. If only some philanthropic Rationalist would walk in and give us Rs. 10,000/- all our difficulties would be solved. Until then we must struggle along.
- Will **Mr. K. P. Gazdar** or anyone knowing his address please send it to the Asstt. Editor?

NOTES AND NEWS.

At the last General Meeting of the R.A.I. a sub-committee has been formed to find ways and means of increasing the funds of the Association. The sub-committee has decided, among other things, to hold one or two social functions. We hope friends will co-operate and help the sub-committee in its task.

The following which appeared in the **Literary Guide** of March 1939, will be of interest to our readers:—

"Reason is the fortnightly journal of the Rationalist Association of India, and we have much pleasure in recording that it is making a gallant struggle to be recognised as an acknowledged representative of liberal thought in the great country across the seas. The insertion in one of its recent issues of an advertisement of Messrs. D. B. Taraporewala recalls that it was in consequence of a member of that firm calling on our publishers nearly half a century ago that Freethought publications were first introduced into India. With some hesitation, and after much persuasion, the gentleman consented to stock a few R.P.A. books, and to include them in his catalogue. The result was that a wealthy Rationalist resident in Bombay became deeply interested, and later provided sufficient funds to enable Messrs. Watts to despatch to several hundreds of schools and other educational bodies a copy of this journal (the "Literary Guide") accompanied with one of their less aggressive books. From that date onwards organised Rationalism became known throughout India and now it is progressing almost beyond our greatest expectations, as the activities in many directions amply testify."

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the R.A.I. it was resolved to hold a public meeting under the auspices of the Association to protest against the Prohibition measure the Government of Bombay intend to introduce on the 1st of August next.

The R.A.I. considers this a violation of the rights and liberties of individuals and moreover in a country like India it

feels that such forcible interference with the social habits and customs of people savours of religious intolerance on the part of those responsible for this measure.

The meeting will be held at the K. R. Cama, Oriental Institute Hall at Ram-part Row, Fort, Bombay, on April 22, at 6 p.m.

Headline in local weekly—"Franco thanks Dictators—Pope thanks God." The Pope "expressed thanks to God for Spain's desired Catholic victory." A Catholic victory indeed! A "victory" that was achieved by bombing civilian populations of women and children. By surrounding captured villages with machine guns and mowing down the inhabitants who had no time to escape. A "Catholic victory" indeed. Fully in keeping with the traditions of the inquisition.

In protest against meagre attendances, the Reverend Laza Kirchenkoff, priest of the Greek Orthodox Church, Palmerton, Pennsylvania, has gone on hunger strike. He is living on weak tea. We recommend goat's milk.

Just as we are going to press we learn of the sudden death of Dr. Har Dayal, another distinguished member. He died of heart failure on March 4, 1939 at Philadelphia, America. A longer notice will appear in the next issue. A. S.

The secretaries of the R.A.I. can be seen at the R.A.I. office at 5-12 Queen's Road, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m.

(Contd. from Page 90).

fellow-men." The Angel wrote and vanished—

"...the next night

It came again with a great wakening light,

And showed the names of those whom God had blest,

And lo! Ben Adem's name led all the rest."

So may it be with Vivian Phelips."

IRRELIGIOSITY AND ATHEISM OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

By M. N. Roy.

(Contd. from page 74.)

As against the purely spiritualist idea of personal God of the strictly monotheistic religions, the Supreme Being of Hindu Pantheism (particularly of the Vedanta), is not a free agent. If it is really Nirakara and Nirvikara, it cannot be the cause of the world. But only in the state of absolute rest it is so. Presently that absolute spiritual state is disturbed, and the Supreme Being manifests itself as the world of phenomena. The seed sprouts and becomes the tree. The spirit becomes matter. The spiritual Supreme Being is bound to the material existence by causal connection. Two things cannot stand in the relation of causality—one the cause, the other effect—unless there is something common in them. The pantheist Spinoza, compelled by the rigorous logic of the mathematical precision of his philosophy, came to this conclusion, and consequently showed that consistent pantheism holds in itself the germ of materialism.

The Supreme Being of pantheism is not purely spiritual, because it is identical with the material world, the latter being dormant in the former, when not manifested. It is generally admitted that an act must be preceded by a desire. The doctrine of creation ascribes desire to God, and thereby limits his absoluteness and brings him down to the human level. But the anxiety of theology and religious philosophy to divest God of his humanness, destroys him as a religious reality. God can have the force of a real existence for the religious, only as a highly idealised man, — a superman free from the limitations of man, yet after all built after human model. The anxiety to rationalise the concept of God—to divest him of the human propensity to create—deprives God of his genuine godliness, of his ability to be really unbounded by matter, robs him of his reality, of his *raison d'être*.

"Religion is the dream of humanity. But even in dream, we are not wafted

in the realm of Nothingness or in Heaven. We still remain in the realm of reality—on the earth; only we do not see real things in the light of reality and necessity, but in the dazzling shimmer of imagination and arbitrariness." (Ludwig Feuerbach, "The Essence of Christianity.")

To deprive God of his religious reality is to abolish him. To rationalise God into a metaphysical and mystical Supreme Being, whose being by its very nature does not possess the force of religious reality, is to deny the existence of God. The conception of God is an irrational conception. Religion cannot be reconciled with reason. The honestly religious, that is, the consistent spiritualist, must not be ashamed of his enamoration with the old dame Faith, and check the inclination to flirt with the fashionable Reason. Any attempt to rationalise religion to shift its basis from faith to reason, is bound to be caught in a vicious circle of irreconcilable contradictions. The religious conception of God, as a supernatural being, contradicts reason. On the other hand, a God, conceived logically as the universal spirit, a synthetic God so to say, is no God. For by its very nature, such a God is the creation of human reason.

The Hindu pantheist doctrine of emanation or evolution, which claims spiritual superiority over the strictly religious doctrine of creation, either identifies the Supreme Being with its absolute attributes, or denudes it of all attributes. In any case, it divests God of Omnipotence and unbounded freedom, because the doctrine of emanation robs God of the prerogative to create at his will. This doctrine does not allow God the freedom of creating or not creating, as he pleases. At the ruinous cost of his absolute power and unbounded freedom, God is cleansed of the human blemish of desire — to create. But the doctrine that places him in this position of doubtful advantage, hopelessly compromises his pure spirituality. According to this damaging doctrine, creation does not take place in consequence of a desire on the part of God. It makes emanation (another

name for creation) of the phenomenal world a process inherent in the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is thus eternally and inseparably associated with matter. Indeed, matter is inherent in its very being. The insistence on the pure spirituality of the Supreme Being compels the admission that, parallel to it, there exists eternally a non-spiritual substance, in germinal condition, at any rate. If the Supreme Being is granted any directive, controlling or initiative function in connection with the evolution and involution of the material substance, then the doctrine of creation comes back surreptitiously. The difference is that the stature of God is reduced at least by half; for he may still have the freedom to create or not to create, but he can create only with the material which exists independent of, at any rate parallel to, himself. Moreover, actually he does not possess the freedom. He is bound to create; otherwise, the process inherent in the eternally existing material substance would go on, and the function of the Supreme Being become obsolete.

To evade this catastrophe, pantheism does not admit the parallel existence of matter. It is identified with the spirit. But the pantheist doctrine of emanation destroys the spiritualism of the unitary primal existence. Since the material world grows out of it, it must contain matter in embryo. So, either the problem of dualism comes back to make of God an useless fixture, or the unity can be preserved only as a material unity. Even the most fantastic extravagance of pantheism—Mayavad—does not guarantee the pure spirituality of the Supreme Being. The doctrine of emanation implies determinism. To unfold itself in the form of the world of phenomena, be it real or a hallucination, is inherent in the Supreme Being. That is to say, its movements are determined by its own laws. Freedom disappears. An existence, subjected to determinism, is conditioned; therefore, it cannot be spiritual.

Then, there still remains the most elementary difficulty. Existence means extension in space. That which is limit-

ed by the material concept of space, cannot be spiritual, which, to be itself, must transcend the limitation of space as well as of time and causality. In the attempt—of theology and religious philosophy—to free religion of its native irrationality, to camouflage the primitive doctrine of creation out of nothing, God is shorn of his unbounded freedom, of his arbitrary will completely unrestricted by anything else existing outside of himself, and is placed in the disgraceful position of subordination, if not directly of matter, but in any case of the law of determinism which obliges him to bring forth the physical phenomena of the universe, which again, obeying the imperious law of determinism, go their own way disregarding the will of the Supreme Being.

Pantheist mysticism not only deprives God of his religious reality; it undermines teleology which is the cornerstone of spiritualist philosophy. It pretends to obviate the baffling question: How could the material come out of the spiritual, the impure out of the pure, the dark out of the light? The magical feat is performed by the simple device of placing nature in God. The origin of matter is discovered in the spirit, of darkness in light, of the ungodly in the God. Since matter cannot originate in spirit without the latter losing its spirituality, darkness cannot emerge from light, the ungodly cannot be inherent in the godly being, the magical feat of pantheist mysticism is simply to declare matter, darkness and ungodliness to be as eternal as the spiritual existence. The old problem of philosophy—the problem of dualism—is not solved. It is simply mystified, transplanted in the very being of God. The fundamental doctrine of religion is sacrilegiously sacrificed by a pseudo-philosophy, which seeks to rationalise religion.

To blow up God into nothingness is atheism, even if this iconoclastic process takes place as a higher form of spiritualism. To debase spirit to the level of matter by subordinating it to determinism, is the height of irrelegiosity, is the negation of spiritualism, although this devastating process of self-consumma-

tion takes place as an attack upon materialism. But the development is a necessary process. Every form of thought contains in itself the germ of its liquidation in favour of a higher form of thought. Religion necessarily leads to theology—the futile speculative attempt to define the nature of God. Theology is futile speculation, because it can never preform the task it sets to itself. As soon as human mind can define him, God ceased to be God. Therefore, the historical function of theology is to destroy religion, as religion. Having destroyed its own source, theology destroys itself. Consistently developed, theology culminates into pantheism. In the pantheistic form, theology consumes itself. Consistent pantheism leads to atheism. Thus goes on the dialectic process of ideological development. It is not possible to declare any one point in this process as its climax, and stop there.

Christian spiritualism, having reached the pantheistic stage, consumed itself—

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in the philosophy of Spinoza and Hegel. That, in its turn, found the logical development in modern materialism. A similar liquidation of the Vedantic pantheism would be the positive outcome of Hindu philosophy. But owing to historical reasons, Indian thought failed to advance beyond the pantheistic stage. The development of Hindu pantheism towards its logical conclusion was arrested during the long period of social stagnation that followed the unfortunate defeat of the Buddhist revolution. One misfortune bred another in succession, and Indian thought remained stationary. The world went ahead. The logic of historical development is that, as soon as the prolonged social stagnation will be broken, Indian thought also will go rapidly ahead from the point at which it temporarily stopped, and catch up with progress made by others.

European thought also remained entangled in mystic-pantheist spiritualism for more than a thousand years after the revolutionary role of early Christianity had been played out. Finally, it came out of the vicious circle. It has been India's fate to linger longer in the darkness of decayed spiritualism. She also must come out of that darkness, if she desires to join the progressive march of humanity. The world does not need her message of mystic-pantheist spiritualism. The Western civilisation has had the experience of that bliss, and has finally produced something superior. India herself should be able to learn the true message of her ancient philosophy. The correct evaluation of that philosophy will be to discern the germ of materialism imbedded in it. In order to draw practical inspiration from the heritage of the past, the leaders of modern India must learn to appreciate the positive outcome of Indian philosophy, which amounts to the liquidation of the religious mode of thought. The highest appreciation of the ancient Hindu philosophy will be to find out how it can help us out of the vicious circle of decayed spiritualism, and indicate the way to real spiritual freedom offered by the material philosophy.

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REVIEWS

A CHALLENGE TO SEX CENSORS, by Theodore Schroeder, privately printed to promote the aims of the Free Speech League, New York City, 1938. 160 pp.

The main thesis of this book is that "Obscenity (just as witchcraft in the past) is always and exclusively a quality of the accusing mind—never a quality that inheres in, or emanates from, that which is accused." In approval of this, the author quotes a passage from a private letter from Dr. Havelock Ellis: "It seems to me that there can be no doubt whatever regarding the soundness of your (Theodore Schroeder's) view of 'obscenity' as residing exclusively, not in the thing contemplated, but in the mind of the contemplating person...." I have personally been making exactly the same claim for the last twelve years and more, in the course of which I was twice prosecuted for so-called obscenity and convicted to pay a fine. Now the claim comes from a writer like Theodore Schroeder, whose articles on psychological, philosophical, religious, medical, sociological and legal subjects have appeared in one hundred and sixty periodicals in six languages and who has been called a superspecialist on Liberty, and is supported by a world leader in sexual psychology like Dr. Havelock Ellis. If authority counts for anything, in this case it is overwhelming. But most rationalists will want arguments rather than authority, and they will get full satisfaction from the book under review, though the author tells us that it is "only a prospectus for a larger book" which he is contemplating. R.D.K.

NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION, by Chandra Chakraberty. Vijaya Krishna Bros., Booksellers & Publishers, 31, Vivekananda Road, Calcutta. Pp. 126. Re. 1.

This book has neither a table of contents nor an index. It is divided into four sections entitled 1. India in World Politics; 2. The Political Outlook; 3. Hind Swaraj or Federated India; and 4. Social Reforms. It is written in the author's usual confused style and bad English. He is in favour of accepting Federation, and suggests the formation of Provinces on a linguistic basis. Some of the social reforms he suggests are very likely to shock the orthodox, though he has very queer ideas about birth-control. He says that birth-control "is a betrayal of racial future." He thinks that

the food supply of the world can be increased indefinitely, that "the ocean is an inexhaustible reservoir....and that "synthetic food may be prepared in concentrated forms which may be quickly assimilated, thus preventing digestive exhaustion and auto-intoxication, thereby sparing nervous energy for intellectual progress." The author is a voluminous writer and extremely superficial, perhaps because he has no time to read. R.D.K.

THE TWILIGHT QUEST, by M.V.V. K. Rangachari, Ranga & Co., Cocanada, Pp.68.

The book bears the sub-title "Science and Social Decencies (The Ethical Shift under Dialectical Materialism)". It is the address delivered by the author as President of the Ethics and Social Philosophy Section of the 14th Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress held at Allahabad last year. It is a pleasant surprise to find a rationalist put into the Presidential chair on such an occasion, and one is inclined to suspect that this was probably due to the fact that Mr. Rangachari so often quotes the Bhagavad-Gita and other ancient religious books. Those responsible for this have probably repented by now. The book deals with Nazis and Communists, Capitalism and Socialism, Marx and his dialectical philosophy, Gandhi and his inner voice and concludes with scientific humanism as the ideal to be aimed at. R.D.K.

FREEDOM IN TWILIGHT, by M.V. V. K. Rangachari, Pp. 26.

This is a paper submitted to the same Congress, on "Freedom and Authority in the Modern State (the problem of Dialectical Synthesis in the History of Scientific Civilisation)". It is divided into three parts: 1. Freedom merges in authority (Sudha Adwaita); 2. Freedom is akin to authority (Visista Adwaita); and 3. Freedom is real and to be achieved. The author advocates the ideal of a Super-State that will co-ordinate the nations. R.D.K.

Also Received.

How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie (D. B. Taraporewala Sons & Co., 210, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay.) 312 pp. Price Rs. 2-8-0.

Essays in Freethinking (Fifth Series) by Chapman Cohen. (The Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon St., London, E.C. 4). 171 pp. Price 2s. 6d. or Rs. 1-14-0.

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DIALOGUE Between a Roman Catholic Woman and a Rationalist

REVIEWS, NOTES, ETC.

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INCONSIDERATE LAWS

By R. D. Karve.

In addition to the evils inherent in the Party System of Government, the Congress Governments suffer from another disability in being obliged to bow to the will of the Dictator. The Prohibition policy is obviously a dictated policy, but the will of the Dictator may not always be so openly seen. Another subtle influence which may be observed in recent proposals for marriage reform both in the Central as well as the Provincial legislatures is the inferiority complex of women as regards men, and of Indians as regards white people.

Mrs. Munshi's bill to enforce monogamy is a combination of both these complexes. Mahatma Gandhi himself suffers from the second complex and has probably encouraged Mrs. Munshi if not instigated her in this inconsiderate proposal. There is not the slightest evidence that monogamy is in any way better than polygamy. But as it is enforced by law in Europe, many Indians are led to think that it must be a more advanced system. Even in Europe, or perhaps especially in Europe, it is not an equitable law. The number of women far exceeds that of men even normally, and this excess is accentuated in times of war. The law thus imposes a disability on women, because it makes it impossible for all women to marry even if all the men married. If morals are not mere conventions and if they may be judged by consequences, this is a most immoral law. The origin of monogamy may be found in the idea that sex activities are in themselves immoral and that though the sanction of the priest may make sex permissible, morality demands that it should be restricted as much as possible. All this is utterly silly. Of course the law is equitable in appearance, since it imposes monogamy both on men and women, but we have seen that this is an illusion, and owing to the double standard of morality tacitly accepted everywhere, the law is only formally observed so far as men are concerned and liaisons are not considered so bad for men as for women, though bigamy is a crime for both. Naturally nobody who is not

hopelessly orthodox will openly advocate this double standard nowadays, but it is there all the same, and this is what really prompts women to demand drastic laws against men everywhere.

There is another consideration which Mrs. Munshi and other educated women fail to see. For the majority of women all over the world, marriage is still the only profession available and those who cannot marry are often obliged to resort to prostitution. It has been said with some truth that the only difference between these two is that between wholesale and retail branches of the same trade. Naturally married women resent this and think that they belong to a higher class, pleading sentiment among other things to prove their case. But the case will hardly stand examination if we consider the number of high class marriages that are arranged on pecuniary considerations alone. Having secured a safe position in this profession, it is quite natural for a woman to aspire to a monopoly in her husband. Now especially those who bring in sentiment on their side of the argument should be able to see that sentiment cannot be bound down by law, that concubinage is a very ancient institution, which is openly admitted in some countries and practised even where it is not admitted, and that the natural result of the prohibition of bigamy will be an immediate increase of concubinage. Cases are not rare in which even educated girls have had to be saved from disgrace by marriage with a man who had already a wife living. And even educated girls may now be found who are perfectly willing to get the advantages of married life without the ceremony. Nor is this tendency at all modern. Even after the law made it permissible for Hindu widows to marry again, it took some time for widows to muster courage to take advantage of the law in the face of public sentiment, and they would prefer to stay with a man as housekeeper and mistress combined rather than marry him and be pointed at by orthodoxy.

It may perhaps not be generally known that it was seriously proposed in Germany after the war to make poly-

gamy legal, because men were scarce and women would rather have a fraction of a husband than none at all. Women have a maternal instinct, even if the sex instinct by itself is considered below their dignity, and unless they are allowed to have children without marriage and without losing their social status, they will consider polygamy a blessing if that is the only way they can get a husband. Some women think it below their dignity to share a husband, but so long as they are willing to be known as somebody's wife, it can make no difference to their status whether the husband has one wife or many. The truth of the matter is that women will not gain in status unless they acquire the capacity to earn their own living. Then they can live independently if necessary if they are not satisfied with the husband.

I need hardly say that I do not approve of the double standard, but this is not the way to change it. Instead of seeking to curtail the liberty given by law to men, they ought to ask for similar liberty for themselves, enabling them to marry another man if they are not satisfied with one, just as men do today in Hindu society. There would be nothing very surprising in their making this claim, since women of the so-called lower castes do actually enjoy this privilege at present. It has only to be extended to all castes. The trouble is that the so-called higher castes have imposed these restrictions on their women intentionally with a view to prove that they have a higher kind of morality than the "lower" castes. Men made the laws, and as this did not effect their own privileges, it was very easy to pretend that their women were "purer". The same idea was behind the prohibition of the re-marriage of widows and customs like "sati". Modern women ought to seek to break these bonds rather than try to impose similar restrictions on men.

The same incapacity of women to earn their living makes any divorce law very difficult to operate. The best divorce law should grant divorce at the demand of either party unconditionally, but if women are dependent on men for their living, humanitarian considerations

come in, as a wife may be left in the lurch with children who have to be attended to and some provision must be made for such cases. This is what prompted Dr. Deshmukh's bill which allows women only to demand a divorce, so that they need not be divorced unless it is convenient to them. It is an obvious injustice to men, which Mr. Lala has tried to remedy by allowing men to ask for a divorce on certain grounds, which are much fewer than are allowed to women. But the question of alimony will always be a stumbling block in the way of divorce legislation. Without alimony, life may sometimes become very difficult for some women. With alimony, women may take undue advantage of it. In America, the husband always pays alimony even if he is poorer than the divorced wife, a perfectly absurd law due to the superiority complex of man.

Mrs. Munshi is responsible for another absurd proposal, which deals with school books. She wants to impose uniform text-books on all schools. She apparently thinks that mofussil schools are backward because their text-books are inferior. There is no possible reason

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why mofussil text-books should be worse. It would be quite right to insist on a certain standard for text-books and that object is amply secured by subjecting them to sanction by the Committee which is appointed for the purpose. It will only lead to favouritism if text-books are to be fixed by government without any choice, and besides no educationist will agree with Mrs. Munshi that the standard of teaching depends so much on the text-books used. Naturally the text-book has its importance, but the method of teaching is more important than the text-book, and the quality of the teacher is much more important than either of these. The reason why the Bombay student speaks better English is simply that he hears more English spoken. No change in text-books is going to affect this, and coercion in this respect would be a futile use of force, unworthy of a democratic government.

TWILIGHT DEVOTIONS

By M. V. V. K. Rangachari

(Submitted to the International Conference, Colombo, May, 1939 by M.V.V.K. Rangachari, Coconada, S. India.)

He dares much who stakes on humanity in our day. It is either Germany, Romanity, or Japanity. It is seldom the plain man or woman that has any news-value. An English umbrella or a far-off Yankee oracle may arrest the front-page awhile. But even as the diplomatic type-writers click in muffled silence, aerial bombers scratch the maps of Africa, Asia and Europe. Countries disappear, the kings leave their thrones, republics are liquidated, their presidents run into exile. The will to peace is professed to be universal. Need sincerity be held in doubt?

There had been wars, as there were prayers before our time. All battles were not fought during the day, nor prayers said during night. Vespers served to link up darkness with light. We have developed yet another technique. It is neither war nor battle. Only incidents rain death, huge cities get under debris, women, the aged and infirm, and children are maimed. What if the civi-

lian shrieks, and the stranger passerby is mutilated? War that took away the flower of humanity condescends to claim the lesser specimens among the unsuspecting and the unprepared. Years on end, these incidents are spread, without an avowal of martial entanglement. Not merely a concession to the prejudice against battle, there is the added advantage of minimising field-losses, or at least of open confessions regarding them. If the belligerents do not declare, much less need the lever-pullers run into the open. "Volunteers" are the prize of our shock-tactics. They operate our plans and pilot other planes. We bow to the marvels of the genius for peace. We admire the unexpected capacity for co-operation and understanding. We congratulate Manchukio, Ethiopia, Spain, China, Czecho-Slovakia, Albania and the rest upon the silent transformation, the peaceful entry into the New Age. Not a gun was fired in their defence in some cases, and though in some instances there was show of force against them, it should be admitted that under the old-fashioned conditions more ammunition could have been wasted. Altogether humanity veered round toward greater reasonableness in the revision of the atlas than the cost of the original 1918 edition. Actuarially, there is all the saving of at least one side.

That means a good deal to us spiritually. More souls are saved for prayer, than of those for whom they are offered. There are more limbs on which emotion leaves the mark. Let religion touch our bodily functions. Or the latter may induce the religious spirit into us. We, men and women in the street, bow with folded hands, and in humility, before the Himalayan heights, the Alpine precipices, and the Pacific depths of human aggressions, betrayals and intrigues.

Not merely the inhuman trends, but on the other hand the infinite capacity for endurance, for suffering and for sacrifice which the victim races have shown, cast on us the duty to fold up our limbs in prayer, not allow them to hang aimlessly in the air, nor engage in distracting movement.

Auxiliary to meditation, the folded arms bring down the head low. It aids concentration. How different the low bent head to the military discipline 'head erect.' There is no looking askance in prayer. All is surveillance, oversight, in war. The general looks around and about for fresh territory to conquer. He minds other lands more than his. When will the men in plain clothes bend him to look below his own feet?

Peace has its thrills no less than war. If the hairs on the fighting hound stand on end, the intensity of that fervour may as well translate itself for better life-saving purpose. The exploits of captains of lawlessness may send tremors in the frame of life, but withal, it withstands all pulls and pushes; shake however much one will, the tree itself never drops. The thrill of elation sustains the survival.

Men and nations may be coerced into singing away their rights. They may with throats choked up voice allegiance to the conqueror. Tremulous sound-boxes may hail signifying blessing. It is the prayer of the proud, joined to the submission of the meek, a joyous soprano and the holy tremolo. On the heights of this feeling whose eyes may remain dry? Eyes filled with tears, not of sorrow, but of real genuine joy, because mankind is bigger than all these gamesters, it survives them all: power-politics, collective security, non-intervention, anti-aggression, pacts, axes, and special responsibilities.

It was given to the psychologist of the New World to tell us that we are afraid because we run, that our emotions are forestalled by bodily movements. It would help yogic practice immensely if we could call up the bliss of joy (ananda) to order. If we become sorrowful merely because we weep, we can withstand that unhappy circumstance in all conditions. Truly our bodily function assists, even augments our state of feeling. But when I translated, over a decade ago, that ancient verse in Mukundamala, perhaps, half-seriously though not half-heartedly, I little realised that the implications of that prayer and humility would have so mortally been attested by events in world-history that

was soon to follow. The translation itself was within a decade of the Great War whose memory was fresher in mind then than it could be any day now. Thus while the powers rub out the maps, let me rub in the prayer:

Baddhenanjalina natena shirasa ga-traissaromodgamaih

Kantena swaragadgadana nayane-nodgirnabashpambuna

Nityam Tvat charanaravindayugala dhyanamritaswadinam

Asmakam sarasiruhaksha satatam sampadyatam jivitam. (Kulashekhar, in Mukundamala, 20).

(Lotus-eyed humanity, let our life taste every day, the nector of contemplation on thy tender feet, our hands folded in humility, forehead bent in reverence, fill us with unquenching emotion, let our voice choke and tremble, and fill our eyes with joyous drops to think of what has been and is going to be the achievement of the race.)

Twilight Devatum are double-barrelled. They have two aims at light and darkness; they touch saints no less than the brutal monsters of our kind.

(Contd. from page 107)

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. pp. 171.

This book needs no introduction to our readers, who are already familiar with the numerous extracts we have frequently re-produced from the author's articles in the Freethinker, as most of the essays in the present book are reproductions from the same source. The author is one of the oldest and the most forceful among rationalist writers and the book is well worth reading. R.D.K.

How to Win Friends & Influence People

by Dale Carnegie (D.B. Taraporewala Sons & Co., 210, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay) 312 pp. Price Rs. 2-8-0.

The author is the President of the Dale Carnegie Institute of Effective Speaking and Human Relations, in New York. And this book, as he says, has developed "out of the experiences of thousands of adults" who attend his classes. The author shows a deep insight into human nature and his observations are accompanied by interesting anecdotes. Reading this book will do immense good to many.

A. S.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN A ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMAN AND A RATIONALIST

R.C.W.—Since our last conversation, I have consulted Father XXX, who is a learned priest, on what you said about the absurdity of the dogma of the Redemption and Atonement being based on the Story of the Garden of Eden.

R.—Well, what had he to say against it?

R.C.W.—First of all, he says that the Evolutionary Theory of the descent of Man is only a profane one which is as yet not generally accepted, therefore, doubtful. Secondly, the Church cannot recognize this, as it reduces Man to the level of the beast. Thirdly, he is morally convinced that the Life, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord prove that He was the incarnated God who came down to redeem Man as the Scripture teaches.

R.—Your priest is no doubt very complacent. As for recognizing the Evolutionary doctrine of Man, I am afraid your Church will immediately commit suicide were she to do so. However strong the evidence, your Church, in effect, dare not recognize such scientific truths which she knows conflict so glaringly with the Scriptures and Catholic doctrines.

R.C.W.—I am sorry to see you so prejudiced against our Church. She does not oppose true Science. Can you name an instance where she has opposed true Science?

R.—Speaking the truth about anything is no prejudice against it; your Church, as is well known, not only opposed Science, but prevented its teaching under penalty as well. I do not know what your Church calls true Science, but I do know that in the sixteenth century, for instance, She bitterly opposed the Copernican doctrine which teaches that the Earth turns round the Sun.

R.C.W.—Well, I must confess that I did not know this.

R.—Your Church not only opposed that doctrine, but prevented its teaching under severe penalty. She

alleged that it was contrary to Catholic doctrine and opposed to Holy Writ. Galileo was persecuted for teaching this, Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake for that offence and Copernicus himself escaped the wrath of the Church by staying in Holland.

R.C.W.—I cannot as yet understand what harm there was in teaching that doctrine and why the Church prevented it.

R.—Pope Paul V thought otherwise and his fears were well founded. Your Church, in effect, teaches a fantastic conception of the Universe, God and Man, based on the childish cosmogony of Moses. Upset that and Christianity goes down with it. Perhaps you are not aware that your Church did not allow the Earth to turn round the Sun for 200 years.

R.C.W.—Yet in spite of all these scientific teachings, the Church is still going strong. Is not that strange?

R.—Not as strong as you imagine. Consider what your Church was 600 years ago, and what is She now? Freethought is spreading among the properly educated precisely on account of modern scientific teaching. Your Church depends mainly on the gross ignorance of the masses, hence her anxiety to control the education of the young. You must also remember that She has had a long start over Freethought.

R.C.W.—Be that as it may, yet it strikes me that many learned people still believe in Catholicism.

R.—I make bold to say that the people you call learned may be ignorant of these scientific facts or have never considered seriously their true import on their religion. I am afraid there is also a good deal of intellectual dishonesty, mystical tendencies and even cowardice due to vested interests and other considerations which make people support such a discredited religion.

R.C.W.—Apart from these scientific facts, don't you think people also
(Contd. on page 104)

REASON

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Editor :

Prof. R. D. Karve, M. A.

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Asstt. Editor :

Abraham Solomon

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Rangachari (Cocanada) Thanks. It appears you have not received the issue of March 1. Another copy is being sent. Both the books you mention have been reviewed in the issue of April 1.

R. K. Hari (Bombay) Thanks, but we regret we do not find it suitable. We would like an instructive article or one on some current topic of interest to Rationalists.

George Waite (N. S. W. Australia) Many thanks for cuttings. We claim a place among the many admirers of Charles Bradlaugh. There could be no better memorial to him than the existence of the National Secular Society of London which was founded by him, and the tradition which is being so well maintained by his successors. We have read his address to the Indian National Congress. Shall write as soon as time permits.

R. K. Javeri (Calcutta) There was no issue for March 15. We regret we were compelled to omit one issue, viz., April 15 due to unavoidable difficulties. We hope to be more regular in future.

B. K. Pande (Naini Tal U. P.) Change of address noted. We published only one issue in April which is being sent along with this one.

NOTES AND NEWS

The Council for the Investigation of Vatican Influence and Censorship has founded a bi-monthly journal, 'Bulletin of Civic'. We have received the first two issues and they contain interesting articles on various aspects of Roman Catholic propaganda and how these are best to be combated. The subscription rate is 1s. 3d. per annum post free, which may be sent to "Civic," Room 6, 12, Palmer Street, London, S.W.1.

We are pleased to note that Messrs. Watts are publishing a new edition of Mr. Joseph McCabe's "The Papacy in Politics To-day." When it was first published two years ago it attracted considerable attention by reason of its revelation of the Papal hand behind all kinds of movements in international politics. Mr. McCabe has now brought the work up-to-date. The price announced is 1s. only. It was formerly published at 7s. 6d.

A reader sends us the following which appeared in the "Religion" column of the London "Cavalcade."

"Saint Apollonia is the Patron Saint of dentists and sufferers from toothache. Recently celebrated throughout Italy was St. Apollonia's Day, thus pilgrimages were made to churches and shrines, all over the country that were dedicated to the Saint. Side by side walked dentists and patients, the torturers and the tortured. St. Apollonia suffered martyrdom by torture and burning in Egypt in the third century under the rule of Philip the Arab. Before she was finally killed all her teeth were extracted. Her teeth were exhibited as sacred relics."

"Pope Sirtus issued a Bull ordering all churches to send the purported teeth of St. Apollonia to Rome. After sixty sacks of teeth had arrived at the Vatican, Pope Sirtus abandoned his plan."

"So pious Italians this day donate candles to St. Apollonia and believe they have secured themselves from toothache for the rest of the year."

PROHIBITION PROTEST MEETING

We make no apology for reverting to the question of Prohibition since it is the burning topic of the season in Bombay.

Our readers already know that the R.A.I. true to its principles, has protested energetically against this ill-conceived measure at a meeting held on the 22nd ultimo, at which many people other than Rationalists were present and spoke.

The following resolutions were passed. The last two were moved by non-rationalists.

1. That this meeting of the Citizens of Bombay, representing several communities, do emphatically protest against the Prohibition policy of the Government of Bombay which will entail an intolerable encroachment on individual liberty and a despotic interference with the social habits and customs of the people, not tied down by religious tenets against alcohol, by forcibly depriving them of the use of alcoholic drinks which such customs and habits have sanctioned from time immemorial.

2. That the Christian citizens of Bombay, in particular, consider this prohibition policy to be a serious and unwarranted interference with their social habits and religious customs. They claim that the Founder of their religion, Himself, sanctioned and sanctified the use of wine in their social and religious functions. That such interference on the part of the Government of Bombay with their prohibition policy will be a violation of the Queen Victoria Proclamation Act of 1858.

3. That the action of the Government of Bombay in issuing permits only to Europeans is a deep insult to those also of Western habits and customs but of Asiatic origin. This invidious distinction is unwarranted and is deeply resented.

The controversy in the papers throw an ugly light on the mentality of the Pro-Prohibitionists. It is evident that they are introducing in this affair their religious bias and intolerance. We are also aware that there are many who while privately admitting that this is an arbitrary and despotic measure are reluctant to say so openly because they are afraid of displeasing those in power.

(Contd. from page 102)

look at Catholicism from quite a different angle? What about the personality of Jesus? How can people knowing the fact of His life, Miracles and Teaching, Death and Resurrection not believe that He was God and that He founded Catholicism on such a rock against which the gates of Hell shall prevail in vain?

R.—I am afraid you cannot be expected to hold any other view on the subject except that which your Church has taught you.

R.C.W.—What! Are all these also untrue?

R.—You have, of course, heard one side of the question. What about the other? Do you know that many eminent and competent scholars, among them learned theologians, themselves, have rejected all these Gospel stories or, at any rate, most of them? Some even doubt whether Jesus ever existed?

R.C.W.—How could they ever come to such absurd conclusions? Countless millions of people during many centuries, from the highest to the lowest, learned and unlearned, all have believed that Jesus was, indeed, the Saviour of Mankind, as described in the Gospels, yet one hears now of people doubting all this.

R.—The argument that countless millions of people have believed a religion does not necessarily make the religion true. What about the countless millions who have also believed other religions than Christianity?

R.C.W.—Do you think that all the people who have given their lives for Christianity did it only for the fun of the thing?

R.—People have also given their lives for religions other than Christianity. By giving their lives for their belief they only proved the sincerity of their belief and not the truth of it.

R.C.W.—That's true, I never thought of that. I should like to know on what grounds the competent scholars

you reject to reject the claims of the Gospel?

R.—By studying these Gospels carefully and dispassionately, in the same manner that a Christian would study the Holy Scriptures of other religions, one cannot fail to discover the weakness of these claims.

R.C.W.—How can one imagine that some ignorant fishermen would write such stories, give such moral precepts and describe such moving scenes unless there was much truth in them? Could ignorant folk concoct such a moving story on which the world's greatest religion has been founded?

R.—No, it was not the sudden invention of ignorant fishermen as you are fond of believing. These Gospels of which there has been a large number, were written in Greece by Greeks long after the events they purport to describe. Out of a large number, only four Gospels have been selected and kept. Clever men had a hand in framing them and shaping them in the form we have now. Nobody knows whether the so-called disciple of Jesus ever wrote anything.

R.C.W.—Still you will admit that it required much ingenuity and vivid imagination to write such graphic descriptions of the life of Jesus and to record such sublime original sayings.

R.—It is evident that those who wrote these Gospels did so from certain traditions and legends current in their days. They have enlarged and embellished the same, as they liked. St. Luke, for instance, in the opening chapter of the Gospel that bears his name, admits that he was not an eye-witness but wrote from hearsay.

R.C.W.—What about these people inventing all the lofty moral precepts and original sayings these Gospels contain?

R.—Many of the sayings they have put in the mouth of Jesus were current among the philosophers and moralists who lived long before the time assigned to Jesus. These sayings were known in Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor

and even China. The Jewish Talmud, for instance, contains many such sayings.

R.C.W.—Do you seriously believe that it is on such materials that Christianity was founded and spread so miraculously over the world?

R.—Christianity was certainly not a sudden invention as we are made to believe. This religion originated in many anterior cults prevailing in Asia Minor and surrounding countries. It owes much to Mithraism, the Phrygian cults, the religion of Egypt and even Zoroastrianism—Christianity is, indeed, an eclectic religion.

R.C.W.—I still cannot rid my mind of the personality of Jesus. Do you also dispute the fact that He was crucified in Jerusalem, was buried and came to life again in that cosmopolitan and populous city?

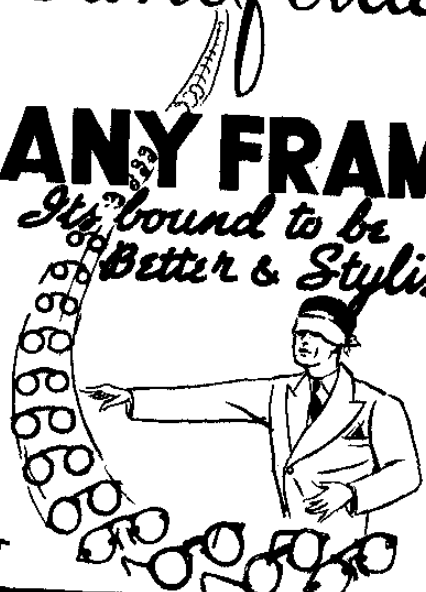
R.—We have only the story of these Gospels to that effect. It is strange

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that the account of the life and death of Jesus in these Gospels should be so full of contradictions. It is, of course, quite within the range of possibility that a religious reformer by the name of Jesus was put to death in Jerusalem, but the story of His alleged resurrection is certainly a tall one.

R.C.W.—Why, what about the empty Tomb?

R.—This also is only to be found in these Gospels. Don't you think that such an unheard-of event as a person coming to life again after being executed and buried would have stirred to the very bottom one and all in such a populous city as Jerusalem? Jews and others could not have failed to know it and yet only the Gospels record this.

R.C.W.—That's true. It strikes me as strange that others than the disciples in Jerusalem did not record such a story.

R.—The Gospels say that not only Jesus came to life, but some others also who were buried in Jerusalem rose and walked into the city. These people evidently believed that coming to life again was an every day affair.

R.C.W.—I must admit that our conversation has given me much food for thought. I hope to continue the same some other time if you have no objection.

RELIGION - THE MODERN ILLUSION

By R. S. Fontes

"O, my advanced Liberal friend, this new second progress, of proceedings 'to invent God' is a very strange one!"

Thomas Carlyle in 'Past and Present.'

A famous Thinker said once that religion is the "opium of the people". One cannot indeed realize the extent to which this saying is true unless he has been able to closely watch the machiavelic methods employed by the Church of Rome, its nefarious influence in the Middle Ages and her attempts to regain temporal power in our days. Unfortunately, her attempts are sometimes crowned with success which proves be-

yond doubt that XX century mentality is, in many respects, very similar to that of the days of Galileo and Savonarola.

But time goes on and the masses have not fully realized that the mysterious Being—old, shabby and cruel—is but the abstract creation of the morbid fancy of man and a means of speculation for religion with her too many padres, monsignors, bishops and cardinals. Will they not realize this common truth? Why? Because the Church—specially the Catholic Church—has always duped them with false promises and unrealizable happiness in some fantastic world which is beyond the sky (it is a pity Sir James Jeans is writing so much about astronomy when my Bible tells me all about it)!

However, we must convince ourselves that the Church will never be able to impose herself on the masses and the youth unless moral and material help is given to her by the Government. And we are faced now with the tremendous political influence the Catholic Church has acquired in modern times. Having control almost over all educational institutes, it is practically easy for her to maintain the religious traditions for future generations. Her adaptability is simply tremendous, particularly dealing with politics. In a Fascist state, the Church is Fascist; in a democratic state she is the supporter of democracy. In this connection it is interesting to read Mr. Allen Flander's booklet on **The Churches and their Politics**, and we shall convince ourselves that the Church, according to its foremost principles, has always been the arch-enemy of free-thought, science and progress. Superstition is the basis of religion and as we all know "superstition is a great enemy of Man". (Vivekananda).

The best way (as for instance in Russia) to combat religious prejudices is: (1) to enlighten the youth by carrying on propaganda in the press and on the platform; (2) to restrict priestly influence in schools and the press; (3) to encourage rationalistic literature. How this is to be done remains a problem for all of us who honour and respect the

names of Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Renan and others. But it is our duty to use all our energies for the great cause of free-thought which ought some day to be the common doctrine of all humanity.

Today religion does not represent a blessing from heaven or the salvation of mankind, but a wooden illusion which is ruinous to the world—a bar to high aspirations of mankind, a menace to science and freethought. The cross is no longer the symbol of peace and charity, but rather of war and hypocrisy. Let us repeat like the great Frederic Nietzsche: "Le dieu crucifié est un anathème sur la vie, un avertissement que nous devons nous zepondre d'elle."

"The eternal life beyond the sky wealth cannot purchase", said Longfellow, but today what cannot easily be purchased is a little common-sense and science which the world so much needs. And when the illiterate masses can grasp the true meaning and intentions of the Church of Rome, then farewell to that **eternal life** and religion. They will throw aside the cross, myths and bibles, and the rest, and say challengingly to the Vatican:—"Now we are not blind. You have duped us hopelessly. Religion has been our great illusion, but let future generations know that the world can and will live without religion."

Till that time comes, let us not forget that there is plenty to be done and we ought to do something practical in India, the birthplace of philosophy and science.

Many of our readers will remember that Mr. Fontes used to contribute to this journal and we are glad that he has started to do so again. He is a keen rationalist and is trying to spread Rationalism in Nova Goa, Portuguese India. He was the Editor and founder of the "Literary Review" in 1934 which has since stopped publication, and a contributor to "Review of Reviews". We learn that with the help of a few friends he is starting a new journal known as the "Renaissance Review". We wish him success.—Asstt. Editor.

REVIEWS

Sadhana, or Spiritual Discipline—its various forms (expository and critical), by Sadhu Shantinath, c/o Oriental Book Agency, 15 Shukrawar, Poona 2. pp. 157 + cxxxvii.

No price is mentioned, but there is a note on the back of the title-page, saying that "all who are interested and deserving can get a copy of this book by sending only the postage (7 annas including registration)" to the address given above.

Though the author's name has a religious odour, the book fully bears out the author's claim that "the position of the writer is that of a sincere and earnest truth-seeker and an unbiassed and uncompromising rational critic. . . ." We are told in the preface that "This is Chapter viii of my work 'The Critical Examination of the Philosophy of Religion' (published in two volumes by the President of the Indian Research Institute of Philosophy, Amalner)." After thoroughly considering from a rationalistic point of view all the indigenous as well as foreign religious philosophies, the author comes to the conclusion "that neither by logical reasoning nor by Samadhi-intuition, can the ultimate nature of Reality be perfectly ascertained", that the intuitions of founders of religions or other persons practising deep meditation are valid only as subjective spiritual experiences, but that there is no evidence of these objects of intuition existing independently of the state of meditation of the person. It is obvious that these spiritual realisations cannot be graded in any order of merit, and hence "there is no ground for any quarrel among the exponents of different religious views, for all of them are based on and have for their ideals unascertained and unascertainable truths." Rationalists who may be inclined to go into the details of the various religious philosophies will certainly find the book very interesting.

R.D.K.

Essays in Freethinking (fifth series), by Chapman Cohen. The Pioneer Press, (Contd. on page 101)

RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF INDIA RESERVE FUND

The Rationalist Association of India was established in 1930 for the spread of Rationalism which may be defined as "the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of Reason and aims at establishing a system of Philosophy and ethics, verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority."

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All the work of the Association including the journal "Reason" is honorary and no member derives any sort of profit, salary or honorarium.

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THE ASTROLOGICAL HUMBUG

by R. D. Karve

There is a saying in French that two astrologers cannot look at each other without smiling, at the gullibility of the public of course. The only real use of astrology was that it led to the study of astronomy, but any modern astronomer would consider it an insult to be called an astrologer. Its use at the present day is to fill the pockets of astrologers, and the claim that astrology is an exact science is nothing short of idiotic. Take for instance the article "In Defence of Astrology" in the Sunday Edition of the Bombay Chronicle, dated 14th May 1939. The writer Mr. Thiruvengkatacharya has the letters M.A. after his name, but he has evidently not the slightest idea of the meaning of science, or the meaning of other words for the matter of that. This is seen from the sub-title of the article: "It is an exact science—though there might be different systems". Considering that different systems give different results, is it possible to attach any meaning to this? The Editor, in an introductory paragraph, piously hopes that "some of those defenders of astrology accept the offer of a scientific test and thus qualify for the prize." This refers to an offer made by Mr. Gokhale in a previous article, on behalf of the Chikitsa Mandal of Poona, of a prize of Rs. 1000 to any astrologer who would stand a scientific test set by that Association. Mr. Gokhale challenges astrologers to (1) find the correct time of birth if the events in the life of an individual be given; (2) give correct prediction of future events from a rectified horoscope; and (3) work out favourable and unfavourable days or weeks or months in a rectified horoscope. Instead of taking up the challenge, the writer adopts a supercilious attitude and wonders whether Mr. Gokhale is a novice or a somewhat dull person who is not able to understand difficult points in astrology. It does not even occur to him that such a person would not be likely to issue a challenge to astrologers! The same level of intelligence is exhibited in the rest of the article.

For instance he tries to explain Mahatma Gandhi's influence over the Congress. I suppose only the initiated can understand the jargon that he writes for that purpose. But he puts his foot into it when he says: "I had the curiosity to cast the horoscope at the time when Mahatmaji began his fast on the Rajkot issue. No astrologer could have chosen a more auspicious time, and I was sure that the fast would have a successful termination in 4 or 5 days, which proved to be correct." Assuming that the fast can be called a success (one never knows what followers of Gandhi will say!), is this the prediction of an exact science? What astronomer will dare to predict that an eclipse will occur "in four or five days?" The Mahatma does not believe in astrology, and still he chose the time better than any astrologer, because, the writer explains, the Mahatma is a great Karma Yogi, who must not be compared with ordinary mortals! And still this superman commits Himalayan blunders in his own opinion!

Another curious thing about this exact science is that "if you can foresee the dangers with the help of astrology, you can be prepared for them and minimise the evil effects", in support of which the writer quotes an American lady astrologer! If this is correct, and you can minimise the evil effects of certain conjunctions of planets, then what becomes of astrology as an exact science? If your death is predicted for a particular day, and you can avoid it by knowing it beforehand, how is the prediction exact? And the same argument will apply to any other danger.

The writer claims that the different systems of astrology lead to the same results, and gives the analogy of different systems of medicine, a very unfortunate analogy. He says "There are different systems of medicine. On that score, do they cease to be a science? Is the efficacy of treatment modified? Certainly not." Obviously no followers of any system of medicine will agree with this, nor will anybody else with some common sense.

The writer mentions three different systems of horoscopes: the birth-time

horoscope, the conception horoscope and the epochal horoscope and says that all of them give the same results. This is utter nonsense, since the interval between conception and birth is not exactly fixed and astrologers can hardly ever get any information about epochal horoscopes, the epoch being the time when the ovum becomes ripe for impregnation; nor is the time between ripening and impregnation fixed. This is merely a way of evading difficulties and the writer uses it for that purpose.

The one difficulty which astrologers can never solve honestly is the problem of twins. Twins are formed in two ways: sometimes from a single egg which splits into two parts which develop separately, in which case they are of the same sex and resemble each other exactly in all details; and sometimes from two separate eggs which are simultaneously impregnated, in which case the twins may not be of the same sex and do not exactly resemble each other. The problem is that if the small interval between the birth of twins is sufficient to affect the planetary position, there should never be any exact resemblance, while if it is not sufficient the resemblance should always be exact. The only conclusion can be that the planetary position has nothing to do with it. But the writer evades the difficulty by saying that when there is a difference, the birth-times may be the same, or nearly the same, but the epochs must be different, that is the two eggs must have ripened at different times. This is an assertion without any basis whatsoever, in fact an assumption made to explain a difficulty, and such assumptions obviously prove nothing. And even if we make that assumption, this is a flat contradiction of the statement that predictions based on the time of birth and those based on the epoch give the same results. This is either idiocy or dishonesty.

A flagrant instance of the dishonesty of astrologers may be found in the fact that even those who pretend to know which horse is going to win a race do not make their money by betting on that horse, but by charging fees for disclosing the name of the winner. Betting

will be a far quicker way of making money if astrology is an exact science, or has any scientific value at all.

The Rationalist Association of India received a challenge from an astrologer some time back for a debate on the existence of God. After a number of letters had been exchanged and the final details left to the astrologer in question to arrange, we never heard of him again. As a matter of fact, an honest astrologer (a rare phenomenon by the way!) must necessarily be an atheist if he has intelligence enough to reason about anything at all. An honest astrologer must necessarily believe that all future events are determined by the positions of the stars and planets at any given instant, since the position at any other instant is only a matter of calculation. If he believes this, not even God has any power to change any of these events, because if he had the power to change any of them, astrological predictions would go wrong and astrology would have no value at all, since it would be impossible to say whether God was going to change any of the events predicted by astrology. All science is based on the assumption

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that similar circumstances will produce similar results, without any possibility of interference, and this is why every reasonable scientist is an atheist. If in any given case, results are not similar in spite of apparently similar circumstances, the scientist will look for a disturbing cause and will never give a thought to the possibility of God being the disturbing cause. If Astrology is a science at all, all honest astrologers have to be atheists, if, as I said, they have the intelligence to argue. But intelligence seems to be at a discount with astrologers and also with those who believe in astrology. Of course it is possible to assert that there is a God who never interferes with anything, but in that case he is as good as inexistent.

This is an excellent topper of the world, that when we are sick in fortune — often the surfeit of our own behaviour — we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and preachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the Dragon's tail; and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Sfoot. I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.—King Lear, Act. 1. Scene 2.

—Shakespeare.

WILL RELIGION END US?

By A Silent Observer.

As Europe is going to shipwreck itself on the rocks of Capitalism—a mad desire for accumulating wealth culminating in War—so is India heading towards its destruction against the rocks of Religion. The danger is positive and it is high time for everyone of us to realize that Religion is going to destroy us unless we did something to avert such a catastrophe.

I shall not attempt to frame a definition of Religion. Religion is not something which exists only in some deep impenetrable chamber of a theologian's mind. It is not that in which sages have

seen the unification of all creeds into a universal brotherhood. Religion is that which is understood as religion by the masses. It is that in the name of which to save a cow a Hindu would kill a Muslim, or to protect an effigy of paper and bamboo a Muslim would kill a Hindu. It is that in the name of which through the length and breadth of Northern India this year Hindus and Muslims have played Holi with human blood.

Leaving aside the isolated instances of the past, if we view Religion in the proper perspective of space and time, we shall realize that it has done more to add to the misery of mankind than to bring to it prosperity and happiness. From times immemorial down to the present day it has left a bloody trail on the pages of history with some insignificant patches of prosperity here and there. Even where its beginning has been happy, its finale has struck the note of destruction for man by man. Wherever Religion has gone it has taught the lesson of hatred under the pretence of teaching love. When a certain form of Religion teaches its followers to love and respect all those who follow it, does it not implicitly teach hatred for those who don't share its views? The result of this has always been either a potential hatred ready to raise its head as soon as the controlling forces vanish, or an open bloodshed and mutual destruction where such forces have once disappeared.

Since there are many religions (i.e. *forms of Religion*) each one differing more or less from the others, yet each claiming to be the only true religion, one may rightly suspect whether there can be a true* religion at all. Theologians tell us that fundamentally all religions are the same, because all of them teach love, pity, honesty, justice and other ethical principles. But we must remember that these are only fundamentals and not the whole religion—and even these fundamentals are common only to the religions of the so-called civilized world but are absent in the religions of the primitive races. Moreover to the masses, fundamentals do not matter, nor are they acquainted with them. Men—most

*True religion=God-made religion.

Lifeless men—have tried to preach to the masses the oneness of all religions, and either they have entirely failed in their purpose, or they have only succeeded in producing just the reverse effect. What matters most to the masses is the ritualistic side of religions. And there is a world of difference between the rituals of one religion and another. If the three important religions of India, Hinduism (which itself is a multiform religion), Christianity and Islam, were the same, or at least the wise men of our country had succeeded in convincing the masses that these are essentially the same, there would have been no party strife among different communities. In fact, the communities themselves would have vanished long ago. A new "Hindustani" religion would have evolved. A fusion of all people into a single nation would have taken place without which to expect political freedom is but an empty dream. India would have become a nation in the real sense.

Here we are concerned chiefly with the three important religions now prevalent in India; but the following should be understood to apply equally to all forms of Religion, except Buddhism, which in the opinion of the writer is not a religion. We are not to judge the merits or demerits of these religions from their effects on a few wise and intelligent individuals. We shall not for a moment entertain the reasons and explanations, however sound and logical, advanced to justify the practices of a religion by one of its really understanding adherents, and we shall equally disregard the opinions of a theologian who wants to convince us of the compatibility of all religions by establishing their fundamental unity. The former is too much biased while the latter is too much unbiased, and each is a comparatively rare phenomenon. The truth being relative we shall call that true of a religion which is true of the masses in their reaction to it. In other words, we shall not regard as true the whole of a particular religion as it is given in books or present in the minds of its "specialists"—not that which one has to be constantly reminded of and is otherwise soon forgotten—but that which has stood the test of time and

has become a second nature with its followers. According to this point of view—the only sane point of view—that residuum of a religion which is left after the wear and tear of time and becomes a part of the unconscious mind, and thus automatically governs the conduct of an individual is that religion in the real sense. Thus true Hinduism is that Hinduism, true Christianity that Christianity, true Islam that Islam, which holds sway over the masses.

In the light of the foregoing, one important fact which must be pointed out now is that it is the belief of the masses that God is the author of their religions and that he has directly prescribed all the religious routine formulas for them. Thus whatever they do, they do according to the direct orders of God. The theologian, together with his lesser brother, the understanding follower of religion, may differ from this, but let us assume for a while that Religion is directly the work of God. Now, if it is true that God made all religions, how is one to account for so many differences in them? To take a popular illustration why did God tell the Hindus not to eat beef and to worship the cow, while he asked the Muslims to kill the same animal in his name and eat its meat? Why, again, did God make it a sin for the Muslims to eat pig's meat (pork) while he said nothing for or against it to the Christians? Is there one God or are there many Gods (with capital G of course!)—as many Gods indeed as there are religions? Had there been only one God, obviously there would have been only one religion. Moreover we are told that God is good. Now if there is only one God he can be anything but good. Indeed he is most wicked to have asked one section of people to do exactly the same thing as he forbade the other to do. He is far more wicked than any European dictator of our times to have sent to us such endless misery not only in the form of communal strife but also in the form of certain meaningless, noisy or ludicrous, religious practices for the individual which he can seldom perform ungrudgingly and cheerfully. He created in us those desires, the satisfaction of which, except under certain prescribed

conditions, he declared to be sin. He, according to the popular belief, created Satan to entice us, and then he threatens us with the everlasting tortures of Hell if we yield to his temptations. Is he not the Greater Satan because he made Satan? God, as conceived by the masses, must be regarded as far more unfair to women than he could ever be to a man, because he either explicitly allows polygamy or says nothing against it, while he is dead against polyandry. Had God been just, he ought to have allowed as many husbands to a woman as the number of wives he allows to a man. But if we stick to the idea that God is good, we must recognise, as the only possible inference, that there is not one God but many Gods, each sending his own prophets and principles to his chosen people. But the idea of the multiplicity of Gods necessitates such a chaos in the universe that we cannot entertain it for a moment. It would mean a complete overthrow of all scientific laws which is contrary to all human experience. We do not find chaos anywhere except in the sphere of Religion. It is only here that the same thing is right as well as wrong at the same time and under the same conditions. The most popular instance of this has already been given. Hence we can neither accept a wicked God nor many Gods. And the diversities of religious force us to discard the idea of the existence of a good God. Therefore the only sane conclusion that we can reach is that all religions are man-made and that the different religions were formulated by different men or different groups of men, and, as such, are capable of all sorts of differences, contradictions, and absurdities, and that God, such as we are asked to believe in, does not exist.

All this is simple logic and commonsense and does not require anyone to read heaps of books on science and philosophy and to waste a life-time in study and experiment to understand it. Even if a completely indifferent being be supposed to be working behind the universe, it is best, for all practical purposes, not to bother about it. This sort of attitude alone can help us to solve

our problems of today and ultimately make us a real and independent nation.

There is no doubt that there are many useful things in Religion, but the evils in it have outweighed them. Moreover we can do a useful thing without labelling it "religious." On the other hand to label a thing as "religious" distorts the entire mental attitude of a follower towards it, and is in itself an evil. Eventually it comes to be regarded as a word of God and therefore unchangeable when it has outlived its necessity. Hence it is clear that Religion is opposed to progress. But, to come to the evils of Religion, perhaps the worst evil in it is the hope that it gives us of life after death. The question of the "here and hereafter," the theory of "Karma," and the idea of reincarnation, are mentally corrupting and morally degrading to the individual. We are tempted and frightened respectively by the promises of eternal rewards and punishments, or we are puzzled and troubled by the ideas of reincarnation and of being reborn as superior or inferior creatures according to our deserts till "Moksh" (the Hindu concept of Nirvana or Salvation) is attained. One idea is as downright nonsense as the other. The purpose of punishment is to reform the wrongdoer, but when the punishment becomes eternal, the idea of reform vanishes. And punishment without reform is the most absurd thing imaginable. Also, if we are reborn as humble creatures in consequence of our sins in the former life, unless we are credited to have a memory transferable with the soul, we cannot benefit by such a punishment. But, except the incredible stories of some simple, superstitious, demented, or hypocritical persons, the evidence of all human experience is contrary to this. No one has ever remembered the happenings of one's past life even if we suppose that such a life is possible. Besides this, if such a thing as reincarnation were in the scheme of things, the majority of mankind and not a few isolated cases would have been found with memories bearing evidence of a past life. Therefore the punishment the reason of which remains unknown is quite useless. Thus the

theory of "Karma" is no less absurd than the idea of eternal punishment. It does nothing but to make us incurably despondent and permanently inactive.

The belief that the individuality of a man continues after his physical form has vanished is one to which the majority of mankind most desperately clings. Some of the most celebrated scientists of the East as well as the West have been victims of this vain belief. Sir Oliver Lodge, the well-known physicist, is a staunch believer in the life after death. On the other hand, Einstein, the greatest of all scientists, is one mighty exception. He says, "An individual who should survive his physical death is also beyond my comprehension, nor do I wish it otherwise; such notions are for the fears or absurd egoism of futile souls." ("The World as I see it", p. 5). But let us leave aside authorities and come to facts. It is a matter of common experience that when one is suffering from some incurable disease, such as cancer, one still hopes to be saved by some miracle. One says to oneself something like this. Don't lose heart; your case may be different from that of such persons as have succumbed to this disease. Perhaps before you die a medicine is going to be invented that will cure you. Those who are fully alive and awake may be sure of life after death, but what about one who is lying on his death-bed? Is he sure? Even in the minds of those who are most vehement advocates of the belief in life after death — those who claim to have seen and experimented with souls—there lurks the fear of death. As regards life after death there is always doubt; if it is not on the tongue it is in the mind, if it is not in the conscious mind it is surely present in the unconscious mind. Everybody loves life and shuns death. Who would not like to die today if he knew that after death he would be in a better and happier state? I have a practical suggestion for those who want to die but fear suicide! *They ought to know that although suicide is a sin according to Religion, to allow a disease to progress and make a short cut of life is positively not.*

These simple facts which everybody can clearly understand show that none

of us is sure whether our individuality would survive death. We do not have to wait till the scientist brings his synthetic protoplasm to the world to show that there is no life after death. We can depend on common sense. Then let us abandon that idea of which not only nobody can be certain, but which is also constantly dragging us down into passive slavery. Let us begin to believe that there is no life after death and let us make the best of the life that is now and before us. It is only when the Hindu forgets his "Moksh," the Muslim his Sensual Paradise, the Christian his Kingdom of Heaven, and when "life is real, life is earnest" becomes the motto of everyone, that there shall dawn a new and great era in the history of India.

Among the followers of different religions there can be no unity. It is a vain hope, a foolish belief that Hindus and Muslims shall unite one day. As long as Hindus remain Hindus, and Muslims remain Muslims, fusion cannot take place. The differences of religions are permanent. No compromise is possible between two essentially different things. Religion has converted India,

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once the most civilized country in the world, into a den of bloodthirsty creatures ready to pounce upon each other at the slightest provocation. It has demoralized India, and is demoralizing it more and more with the passing of time. We cannot be blind to what has been happening in Cawnpore, Benares, Patna, Rangoon and Hyderabad; we cannot forget what happened in Kashmir, Peshawar, Bombay, Lahore and Amritsar, and countless other places. What will happen in future? Are we heading towards the making of a better, greater, and more civilized India? Certainly not! In Europe "After two thousand years of mass, we have got as far as poison gas" (Thomas Hardy); so in India after struggling for two hundred years for unity and freedom, Mr. M. A. Jinnah asks us to believe that "The Muslims are Sudeten Germans in India." This is the reward of Religion. We must remember that if we don't destroy Religion, it will surely destroy us. I see the fire has already started to destroy our country. Shall we stop it, or shall we allow it to reduce our country to ashes?

THE CONSOLATIONS OF RELIGION

by Chapman Cohen.

I receive a fairly large number of letters from Christians who tell me of the consolation they have found in their religion. I daresay if I were to ask for them I could receive an equal number of letters from Mohammedans that they also receive consolation from their faith. The same would occur with the devotees of any other religion I cared to select. I do not question the truthfulness of any of these people: I would rather affirm it. But on running my eye over a number of quack medicine advertisements I get the same kind of information. I do not of necessity question the truth of even these people, who after taking certain pills or powders "feel better." It is quite beside the point for a medical man to point out that the ingredients of the pills or powders are innocuous, and could have no influence whatever on the diseases they were supposed to cure. The people who took them felt better, and they must be taken as authorities as to

what their feelings were before and after. And even though some of them may have died from the diseases the pills were supposed to cure, yet the statement that they felt better stands. I also get the same assurance from some who think that a good dose of whisky when one is feeling depressed or "out of sorts" is a sure way of enabling one to face the hardships of this none too comfortable world. People get comfort from all sorts of remedies, religious and non-religious, spiritual and spirituous. That is one of the commonplaces of experience. The explanation of it would not be difficult, but it would take me away from the particular items I wish to bring before my readers.

* * *

The Appeal to Facts.

For some time there has been lying on my desk a number of clippings from American Newspapers, which show this theory of religious consolation in a peculiar, but not unusual, light. The first item is concerned with the celebrated Chicago gangster, Al Capone. He is at present serving a long term of imprisonment in the Terminal Island Federal prison. He did not get religion while he was there, because he was always a member of the Roman Catholic Church. But, perhaps because Capone thought the Roman Church already had more than its fair share of the criminal population, and desired to help other forms of Christianity that were not quite so well-supplied with criminals, he has been converted by a Baptist Minister, the Rev. Silas A. Thweatt. Mr. Thweatt preached a sermon in the prison; the Lord moved the heart of the gangster, and Capone is now among the saved—a shining testimony to the power of religion and of the truth that Christ delights to get the biggest sinners. I do not think that the records of Atheism have anything of this kind to offer. The Atheist who has robbed, or murdered, or run a murder gang, has no way of getting forgiveness while he is doing a "stretch." His creed holds nothing of so consolatory a character. If I were to go and deliver an address on Atheism to the inmates of Dartmoor or

(Contd. on page 119)

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

S. W. Willatts (N. Q. Australia) Many thanks humorous letter. Your comments on the group photo are correct. Our Ed. is 57. But he believes that age is not always a chronological affair and we think amply proves it. Mr. D. R. D. Wadia is one of the founders of the R. A. I. Your encouraging letters are very welcome and we reciprocate your good wishes.

Rangachari (Cocanada) Thanks. Will appear. We have three of your articles on hand.

A. U. (Agra U. P.) Thanks. We shall be pleased to receive more articles from you. Please be good enough to send us names and addresses of likely new readers.

BETWEEN OURSELVES

Among the readers of this issue will be many who were some years back members of the R. A. I. and who dropped off mostly during 1935-36 when the Association had ceased its activities and "Reason" had stopped publication.

Whatever may have been the reason for their discontinuing membership

we are sure it is not due to any lack of interest in the cause. From this and other copies of "Reason" that are being sent to them they will realize that the R.A.I. is again gathering strength, preparing to push forward stronger than ever. We hope they will decide to rejoin the R.A.I. immediately and thus render help when it is most needed.

In less than a year the R.A.I. will be completing a decade of its career. Coincidentally it has been one of the most eventful periods in the history of India and the world. The world seems to have been overtaken by an 'epidemic of insanity.' Liberties which took generations to acquire have been lost almost overnight. We saw the rape of Abyssinia, the Vatican intrigue in Spain, heard the tramp of barbarian feet in beautiful Vienna, persecution of freethinking in Czecho-Slovakia and a holy mess in the "Holy Land". We witness one of the most inhuman persecutions the world has ever known, the trampling underfoot of international law and morality, the ruthless march of "unconscious power". It is worth noting that all this has happened in countries which were loudest in their claims for Christianity, and those which have taken the path of Christian example.

It remains for the freethinkers to lead the world back to sanity.

All these things have had their repercussions in India. This vast country is in a state of social and political transition. Political activities have proved more attractive to many who might otherwise have taken greater interest in the Rationalist movement. It is not surprising that the voice of Reason receives but little heed. But the fact that the R.A.I. has survived in spite of such unfavourable conditions shows that there are people though small in number who realize the necessity of an organized body of Rationalists. It is the duty of all rationalists in India to consistently continue their efforts to make more and more people understand the meaning and realize the value of Freethought.

There are hundreds of Rationalists all over India who are not aware of the existence of the R.A.I., many of them fighting a lone hand against the forces

of superstition and mysticism. And nothing is more discouraging than a feeling of isolation. We must establish contact with them. Our members in different parts of India must help us in this task.

Abraham Solomon.

We gratefully acknowledge renewals of membership from the following:—

Mr. A. M. Zawani, Karachi, I. Chamboorwala, Hyderabad, The Hon' Justice Mr. K. C. Sen, Bombay, R. Hurry, Bombay, V. D. Satghare, Bombay, Dr. S. R. Joglekar, Bombay, P. M. Wagle, D. S. Tanavde, Bombay, Dr. C. L. D'Avoine, Bombay, I. D'Avoine, Bombay, Claude D'Avoine, Bombay, E. D'Avoine, Bombay, J. F. Vapiwala, Bulsar, Dr. Geo. Coelho, Bombay, Mrs. Brenden-Brady, Bandra, B. D. Solomon, Bandra, Lt.-Col. Sokhey, Bombay, P. N. Agate, Bombay, L. R. Tairsee, Bombay, David Erulkar, Joseph Erulkar, J.R. Labelle, Bombay, A. Raptokos, Bombay, Ramdas Khimji, Bombay, Goolamaly C. Moolji, Bombay, S. A. Brelvi, Bombay, R. P. Paranjpe, Poona, Dr. D. R. Chaubal, Bombay, N. M. Bhathena, Bombay, Dr. C. R. Athavle, Bombay, Dr. D. D. Karve, Poona, Dr. H. Ghosh, Calcutta, Dr. A. C. Ukil, Calcutta, Dr. W. N. Welinkar, Bombay, R. R. Shreshta, Allahabad, V. V. Sohoni, Poona, C. Deb. Banerji, Calcutta, Dr. K. G. Nerurkar, Dr. R. V. Sanzgiri, Bombay, Mrs. D. R. D. Wadia, Bombay, T. H. Modi, Bombay, Akbar Frosh, Bombay.

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by R. G. Ingersoll

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OBITUARY.

Dr. Har Dayal.

Dr. Har Dayal was born in Delhi in 1885. He had a dazzling academic career and was selected by the Government of India for studies at Oxford. He gave up a lucrative career in the British Civil Service and returned to India and started active political work.

In 1912 he went to San Francisco, California, where he was given a chair in philosophy. He later occupied the same position at the University of California at Berkeley. But fired with the dreams of a free India he carried on vigorous political activities and was consequently arrested in California. On the advice of American friends he escaped to Germany to carry on his political activities there.

In the post war period he dedicated himself to the pursuit of knowledge. He taught history and sociology in Sweden for ten years. He mastered many European languages in which he wrote and lectured freely. Since 1928 he was mostly in England. He collaborated with Bart de Ligt in his peace work in Paris. Har Dayal became well known as a humanist, pacifist and internationalist.

A ban had been placed against his return to India which was recently removed and he intended to return to India after his American tour.

Among the books he wrote are "The Bodhisattva Doctrine," "Hints for Self-Culture," and "Twelve Religions and Modern Life."

Dr. Har Dayal was a member of the Rationalist Association of India and was keenly interested in it. He attended the 25th International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers as a delegate of the R. A. I.

Dr. Har Dayal died of heart failure on March 4, 1939 at Philadelphia, America, at the age of 54.

A. S.

The trouble with most folks isn't so much their ignorance, as knowin' so many things that ain't so.—Josh Billings.

(Contd. from page 116)

Parkeston, I do not imagine for a moment that any atheist criminal would jump to his feet and say he was "saved." I might make him feel sorry, I might induce the resolve to behave better in future, but I could not give to a hardened criminal the feeling that his past deeds did not matter, or that he would be counted as amongst the stars in the crown of the Saviour. In this matter Religion has something that Atheism is without.

Back to the Bible.

Here is another example, also from America. Robert S. James has recently been electrocuted for the murder of his wife. It happened thus. James had been married seven times. The Lord only knows how he got rid of the previous six wives, but there came a day when R. S. J. hungered after yet another mate. James might have left his seventh wife and either lived, unmarried, with the desired number eight, or married her and so have been guilty of bigamy. Either of these alternatives would have shocked the religious conviction of Mr. James. The American nation having no longer faith in the privilege given man by the Bible that if a man's wife no longer finds favour in his eyes then he may give her a bill of divorcement and send her about her business, James devised another plan—in fact, two plans. The first consisted in placing his wife's naked feet in a box of rattlesnakes. But the rattlesnakes, like the lions in the Bible who refused to eat the prophet of God, did not bite. So James devised another plan. He drowned his wife in a bath, and then, to give the appearance of suicide or accidental death, threw her into a fishpond. But he was discovered, tried, found guilty, and electrocuted. He did not, like another Biblical character, go to heaven in a chariot of fire, he got there through its modern equivalent—a flash of electricity.

That James has gone to heaven is no idle speculation. James had always been a religious man, but a rather careless one. Still, he was no Atheist, and just as Al Capone would have urged

that without religion no man's property would be safe, so James would have argued that if the belief in God were to disappear no person's life would be secure. While waiting in prison James became more and more religious. He was rebaptized, and his religious fervour was such, that after his conversion, as a Los Angeles paper says, he "never strayed from the path of virtue to the extent of smoking a cigarette." He read the Bible regularly, and confessed that "The Bible has shown me the way home." Whether his wife and his six predecessors had found their way "home," James does not say. Perhaps not; they had not committed murder; they had been given no time to "get right with God." James has at least shown others a way to salvation. Let us hope that many may learn the moral of the life of R. S. James.

* * *

A Convincing Case

Another instance, also from the United States (Columbia, South Carolina). In this case six men were executed for murdering a warden, while trying to escape from prison. These men died as edifying a death as did R. S. James. They did not have quite so long in prison to meditate on religion, but they got there just the same. The first one to be executed, walked calmly to the electric chair, told those around him that he "had made his peace with God," and died in the calm assurance that he and God understood each other. He was not of such religious purity as James, because he walked to his death smoking a cigar. Another of the five was actually singing, "Lord, I am coming home," as the electric current was turned on. There is not a preacher in the United States who can say that this man did not reach his designated destination. It may be that by this time he has met James and "swapped" experiences. During the translation of the whole five from Columbia to Heaven, the hymn "Till we meet with God" was sung. That hymn should be renamed "The Gangster's farewell to his Mates." An Atheist might have faced his death calmly, but could he have looked forward to meeting his chums in heaven? Such pro-

found faith in the presence of death deserves its reward.

But there was a sixth man? It is not said he was an Atheist, and one feels sure that, if this had been the case, it would have been mentioned. So unusual a thing would be what newspaper-men call "News." It is stated that this sixth man "expressed no interest in his soul." It is true he might have prayed privately, but he ought to have considered the feelings of the five. They were shocked at such behaviour. They knelt and prayed for this obdurate soul. They had earned the greeting: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"; they could bid each other good-bye in the face of the death chair, with a "Till we meet with God." They realized the glorious truth expressed by that great English preacher, Spurgeon, "You great sinners shall have no back seats in heaven. You shall be near to Christ. You shall sit with him on the throne."

How providential it was that the callous example of this single man was not permitted to weaken the religious convictions of the other five! Until their last moment on earth their eyes were lit with the faith that defies the terrors of this world and fastens its gaze on that brighter sphere that lies beyond the tomb. The sixth man could have no such consolation. The barrenness of unbelief, its utter inability to minister to a troubled mind, were never better shown than in these electrocutions. The five had faith in their God and Christians know that that faith is never in vain.

In Search of a Moral

Now, I feel that in all this there is imbedded some profound religious moral. There seems something "providential" in all that happened. Consider first the case of James. Providence did not prevent his killing his wife. If that had been done, he would never have been able to say that God had shown him the way home. His wife had to be murdered as the first important step in the salvation of James. Had she simply left him, had the Lord removed her by an ordinary death, still the salvation of James would have been uncertain. The wife had to be killed as part of "the plan of salvation."

Take also the case of the rattlesnakes. If they had bitten Mrs. James, she would have died a death that might very easily have passed for accidental. Her death had to be of such a nature that detection and conviction would follow. And it did. James at no time expressed regret for having killed his wife, or gave vent to a desire that she would also find her way home—the same home as himself. Greater things were in his mind; he had caught a glimpse of the "vision splendid," and was filled with thankfulness to the Being who had used his wife as the instrument of his own salvation. And who was he to question the wisdom of God's method of saving souls?

So with the other six. They might have been shot in some gangster's quarrel, and buried with no greater circumstance than that with which the earth is shovelled over a dog. They might have been "taken for a ride" by some rival gangsters and have passed from the scene "unshriven and unsaved." It was the murder of the warden that was operative in their case. It was also the murder that supplied the condition of their sanctification, and not merely the murder but their being sent to prison and so given time to turn their thoughts to religion. All the incidents fit together like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. Such a concatenation of distinct circumstances could never happen in a universe in which a supreme mind had no place.

The lesson to be derived here is truly a Christian one. The central lesson of Christianity is not so much that you must not sin, but that if you do you may escape the consequences of sin. The Atheist can hold out no such hope. He can only talk of "cause and effect" being as inevitable in the ethical as in the physical sphere. The Buddhist can only repeat that no man escapes the consequences of his actions. Modern Science teaches us the same hard lesson. It is Christianity that can take another view. It can recall the lesson of the thief on the Cross who went to heaven with Jesus because he had faith in the Lord. It is Christianity alone that can say with Martin Luther, "Sin and sin mightily, but have all the more faith in Jesus who con-

quers all sin." The power of God did not prevent these men committing the crimes for which they were executed; but it did save their souls at the last moment, and it is not the body but the soul that is of importance. And the power of God to save souls, the evidence of his desire that the sinner shall be saved, is to be seen in the fact that Mrs. James and a prison warden were used to save the seven sinners.

Perhaps I may not have caught the moral of these executions aright. So I offer a final suggestion. Some little time ago the 'Daily Telegraph' published a number of letters from different people on "How to find God." May it not be that R. S. James and the other six provided an answer to the question? After all, Christianity began with a murder, and but for that murder the world would have been without salvation.

Chapman Cohen.

AGGRESSIVE PEACE

By M. V. V. K. Rangachari

While everybody desires peace, how is it that we are all threatened with war overhanging relentlessly against the world-skies? True, there are our war-lords for whose advantage men fight and kill in vast numbers. But are not these war-lords themselves men, themselves the sons of their mothers, and the hope of their countrymen? They are leaders who have been placed at the top by mass-confidence. They were not monsters born to bring on death and ruin upon mankind, but genial kindly faces that could secure the implicit following of the rank and file.

It needs capacity and insight to command. It needs perpetual vigilance to retain it. Men and women do not easily part with their liberty, which is what implicit obedience comes to. The superior quality of the head and the heart begets trust; it is perpetually put to test. Propaganda may aid, fear openly or insidiously administered may sustain for a time. But humanity regains the peculiar sense which divides leadership and tyranny. The dictator cannot long remain the tyrant, unless he converts his entire following into his mood.

Then, and only then, national ideals, race prejudices, ideological conflicts come into play. Armament-drives and mass-drills become possible. All the time the spectre of collective death and impending breakdown is kept sedulously in the background. In the frenzy of enlistment, in the stupor caused by amazing machine-power, man loses hold of the central purpose of life: "to live well and in peace."

They too promise peace on earth, our war-lords: **the peace that passeth all understanding.** In the welter of national prejudice and misunderstanding, there is no peace during life. After that, it is the peace of the grave. Is it because human genius defeated itself that the promise is made abundant, overflowing the limits of common experience? What mankind sorely needs is peace as may ordinarily be known and socially enjoyed. There is something sinister, even suspicious, when in the name of that peace something is offered that does not pertain to this world, however, high the promise, and from whatever source of militancy, national or international.

I put it to the common men and women of the world, that the responsibility is mostly theirs in having given away the saddle to unthinking sharp shooters. They are marching humanity headlong towards disaster. They have mismanaged the world's economic forces. They do not shrink from tearing away the world-map to pieces that their vaunted ambitions may be fulfilled. They are monkeying with universal life, and in the name of power-politics they are not ashamed to strike without provocation and excuse. Did the people of the world or any section thereof authorise the commission of such mad deeds? Would they have authorised such acts, if only proper warning were made in time? And in all this fury, and tumult, where is the voice of woman heard? The tender voice and the shrill cry from the world's best mothers, sisters and wives is drowned in the roar of artillery and aeroplane-bombers. What an ugly performer is man who through his misdeeds punishes not merely his kind, but ravages all that is valuable and sacred in life.

To save ourselves from ourselves is the problem of the hour. We are fast forfeiting the claim to lead, for leadership which is not bound for safety is doomed. Millions may trust and hang attentively on our word. But sooner than expected the moment arrives when that very word spells the undoing. Certainly, the method of war is not the way and the word. It may cry hoarse and assert itself for a season. But lodged deeper within the human breast, there is a force more aggressive than all the wars of the world, its guns and ammunition, its bombs and poison-gas. It is the instinct for life, for continuity, even for aggressive peace. Cocanada, 10-5-1939.

TOWARDS A HAPPIER WORLD

by Vivian Phelps

I believe that man's chief concern should be in the Known rather than in the Unknown, and that reason, fully equipped with knowledge and inspired by humanity, should be his ever-present guide in all his dealings, all his problems, all his temptations, all his aspirations, all his ideologies. I believe this to be the way towards a happier world. I believe in stimulating freedom of thought and inquiry. I believe in the promotion of systematic non-theological moral instruction which will cultivate in the young moral and intellectual fitness for social and civic life.

I am a Rationalist. It may be asked: "What exactly is Rationalism?" It has been defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority.

I am, it will be seen, a heretic, and the considerations which made me one, summed up in general terms, are; "The apparent impossibility of and complete want of evidence for the miracles on which Christianity was founded; the destructive criticism of the Bible, which cannot be gainsaid; the intensely grave suspicions thrown upon the originality of Christianity by the revelations of comparative mythology; the various dilemmas arising from the accepted doctrine of evolution; the inadequacy and conflicting

character of the so-called theistic proofs (proofs of a personal Deity); and, finally, the fallacies in arguments hitherto so popular and faith-producing" (The Churches and Modern Thought, pp. 230-1 of the Thinker's Library edition).

As for my personal attitude towards the "larger hope": "By all means let those who can continue to cherish the larger hope—why should they not while all is unknown?—and let the metaphysician continue to translate their aspirations into philosophical language; but the guiding spirit in human affairs should be, and one day will be, a scientific humanitarianism working on rational principles for the peace and happiness of all mankind" (ibid., p. 265).

Among the well-educated adherents of one or other of the supernatural religions of the world there are many who seem to think that they can conscientiously remain in the fold in spite of many a mental reservation. Presumably this is because they still continue to believe in a Divine Creator who directs the universe. They are of the number who feel themselves both morally and intellectually justified in brushing aside the unsolved problem of evil—a problem that, to quote Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, "is an impasse the most impenetrable of all the barriers which man tries to pierce."

Well, in my own case I have found it impossible lightly to overlook this impasse. Like Storm Jameson has told us of herself, "it was not long before I began to think that God who was responsible for this world must be a monster of cruelty. It was a repugnant idea and finally unbearable. Since one could not deny the cruelty, it seemed better to deny the God and to face the fact of cruelty" (see Cape Times, August 28). All true Rationalists are Humanists.

There is an evil acutely in evidence at this moment—war. It is an evil so dire that eventually, if not overcome, the fittest to survive on our planet will be the gunman, the cut-throat, and all of that ilk. Wars can and must cease. Let us consider first the "can".

War may be classed among the avoidable evils. But if we are going to

clasp the hand that drips with blood; if we are going to ally ourselves with those who regard war as a blessing in disguise and teach this pernicious nonsense to the rising generation; if cold water is to be thrown on man's first serious essay to abolish war by the League of Nations; if over-population, one of the main causes of war, is to be encouraged so as to fall in with the dogmas of religion, the ambition of militarists, and the avarice of profiteers; if we are to raise tariff walls higher instead of demolishing them altogether; if what H.G. Wells has called "crazy combative patriotism" is still to be taught in schools; if social reform is to be a mere tinkering with the evils that cry at our doors for redress; if religious beliefs are to remain a pregnant cause of strife as of yore; if the Christian Churches can do nothing better than one section of them blessing weapons intended for aggression and massacre, and another enjoining the turning of the other cheek to the assailant; if all the root causes of war, civil and international, are to be retained, and the spirit of Humanism to be, as it certainly is now, conspicuous by its absence—if all these things are to remain unchanged, then indeed there is little or no chance that wars will ever cease.

But cannot we change these things? We have made a big stride forward from the scalp a day of the savage to the "service a day" of Baden Powell. Can we not, before it is too late, take another stride? Can we not let Humanism be our inspiration when we take counsel together? There will then be a real live chance for wars to cease and for civilization to be saved.

And now a reflection which I hope may serve to emphasize "must." Lord Lytton's fanciful tale, *The Coming Race*, is now out of print. I wish some enterprising publisher could find it worth his while to reprint it, for it would, I feel, help to bring realities home to the million. The author conceives the discovery of a force which he calls Vril and which was of such a destructive nature that force for the settlement of disputes had to be ruled out, and wars ceased. We too have now, to all intents and purposes, discovered Vril, or at least are well

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on the high road to it. Over thirty years ago I wrote: "The prophets foretell that we can look forward to the abolition of war only when the engines of destruction—flying ships armed with weapons of death, for example—are of so fearful a nature that it will at last be brought home to mortals that this clumsy and barbarous machine for settling disputes is too absurd, too suicidal, for further employment. But need we wait for long weary years burdened with a thousand and one curses of war and militarism till this supreme horror has been invented. The issues at stake being of the very gravest, I am taking the opportunity of repeating this warning to my fellow human beings, whatever their country, race, or creed. It conveys what I, now more than ever, feel and believe. I look to the reign of law, the reign of humanity, the reign of reason, and, with Eden Phillpotts,

I see a new-born generation rise
Fearless, unfettered, striving hand in hand
To set men where full surely be might
stand;
Reason their every action glorifies,
And fire of pure goodwill shines in their
reverent eyes.

FREEDOM

In every society there are modes of conduct which, though not in themselves harmful, offer an easy prospect of becoming so. It is therefore assumed by many that it is the business of the State actively to discourage such conduct, even to the point, if necessary, of making its most innocuous expression illegal. No one is harmed, for instance, by a moderate indulgence in alcoholic liquor; but since drunkenness is harmful both to the individual and society, the State, it is said, is justified in prohibiting the manufacture or sale of alcoholic liquor. The same principle is urged of noxious drugs, of the use of tobacco, of gambling. Sometimes, indeed, the principle is carried to an extreme point and it is said that the State may prohibit any form of conduct, Sunday games, for example, which a majority of the society finds obnoxious. The claim to freedom, it is urged, may be denied in the interest of a social view of good.

I do not find it easy to accept any single principle that is obvious and straightforward as applicable to the very complex problems we encounter in the realm. Neither the fact that

a mode of conduct may be harmful in excess, nor the fact that, whether harmful or no, society dislikes it, seems to me in itself a just ground for its suppression by the law. The first case seems to me one for safeguards against excess; care, for instance, may be taken to see to it that it is manufactured at a limited strength, is sold only under careful restrictions, and so on. The second case I find it impossible to decide as a general principle, and apart from particular cases each of which is judged upon its own merits. I am prepared, for example, to make it illegal to keep a gaming-house; but I am not prepared to legislate against a social game of bridge played for money in a private house. Conduct must be punished or prohibited when it is harmful in itself or in the excess in which it touches society before we ought to seek access to the clumsy machinery of the law.

For we cannot suppress all modes of conduct in which excess does harm. In most cases, we have to leave the individual to judge at what point excess is a fact. Over-eating does great harm, but no one would propose legislation against over-eating. Many motorists sacrifice their lives to their motor-car, especially in America, but no one would propose legislation against an undue indulgence in motoring. False social standards result from our excessive adulation of film-stars and athletes; but we should obviously be merely foolish if we legislated against the publicity which makes for that excessive adulation. We have always, I think, to study any proposed social prohibition in terms of the subject to which it is applied. We have to remember that it always runs the risk of undermining character by a limitation of responsibility. Men are made not by being safeguarded against temptation but by being able to triumph over it. It would be impossible to forbid the use of cheques because some people succumb to the habit of embezzlement. There is a clear case for forbidding the sale of noxious drugs like heroin or cocaine except under severe restrictions, because it is clear that in themselves their consumption is bound to harm the recipient. There is a clear case for insisting that persons, even if they be passionate Christian Scientists, who are suffering from an infectious disease like small-pox, shall be isolated until they are cured; for anyone who goes about with small-pox inflicts direct and measurable injury on other persons. But unless we can show that the particular mode of conduct it is proposed to repress must necessarily destroy the will-power of those who practise it, as is true of noxious drugs, or directly and unquestionably injures the rest of society in a measureable way, I think the method of prohibition an unwarranted interference with freedom.

—H. J. Laski—"Liberty in the Modern State"
Pelican Ed. pp. 149-151.